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Ethnicity and Integration among Mennonites in Winnipeg: The Harmonization of Heritage and Ambition in a Pluralist Canadian Present

by

Paul Harms

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial

fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts

Department of Anthropology

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Abstract

Mennonite ethnicity in Winnipeg today reflects the life that Mennonites there live, and it is simultaneously part of the means through which Mennonite life there is constructed. While Mennoniteness is sometimes set in opposition to Canadianness, being Mennonite is also one of the ways people can be Canadian today. Mennonite integration within Canadian society has partly been the result of people's voluntary and obligatory responses to Canadian nationalism, and also to the attractions and demands of the Canadian economy. Mennonite identities are ascribed, but there are many legitimate ways to express those identities, including participation in Mennonite religious activities and institutions, and participation in some iconically meaningful Mennonite cultural traditions. Mennonites are culturally diverse, but they draw a sense of solidarity from the imagined community that they form. Post-war revisions to Mennonite conceptions of their heritage both reflect and support their adaptations to their Canadian environment.

University of Alberta

Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled Ethnicity and Integration among Mennonites in Winnipeg: The Harmonization of Heritage and Ambition in a Pluralist Canadian Present, submitted by Paul Harms in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

David Bai

Mike Evans

Gerhard Ens

June 28/00

Preface

I want to do three things with this thesis. Most of all, I want to demonstrate that I have learned something. Maybe that in itself will not make the paper useful or interesting for anyone reading it, but my main goal in this project was to learn, and I want to communicate what I have learned. If anyone else gains something from the thesis, that will seem like a nice bonus to me, but the paper is already a success, because I have learned a lot in the process of writing it. Secondly, I want to communicate my understanding of the concept ethnicity. Instead of reading scholarly descriptions of ethnicity and then choosing to found my thesis on the one or two that seemed best or most suitable to me, I have chosen elements of a few authors' works, and tried to combine them to form something more satisfying to me than any of their works alone. I hope that my conceptual writing about ethnicity is lucid, useful, and flexibly applicable. The other thing I want to do is discuss some of what forms Mennonite ethnic identities in Winnipeg, and some ways that those identities are expressed. Most of the paper is consumed with this third goal.

I realize that some of what my paper examines is thought by some to be sacred, and my looking too closely and too long at it might seem irresponsible or disrespectful. I hope very much that I have been able to avoid that. My intention has only been to learn.

I think this thesis will be interesting and useful. It is primarily a conceptual paper, so it will never be useful in the way an axe or a blueprint is useful, but it is explanatory and exploratory, so reading it might be useful for developing an understanding of a complex topic. Understanding is useful. The thesis topic is interesting to study because ethnicity is one of the more salient forms of social organization in the modern world (Tambiah 1994:430) and in Canada (Kymlicka 1998:5). We all have ethnic identities, whether they are very present parts of our lives or not, so the topic is interesting in at least the same way that any story about ourselves, or insight concerning ourselves, is interesting. Ethnic bonds are

the basis of a certain kind of feeling of solidarity with some people, and of difference from others (Barth 1969a:10). Solidarity and social exclusion are interesting topics, too, and understanding them is something with probably unlimited usefulness.

Acknowledgements

Many people have contributed a great deal to this paper. For the most part, those people either quite directly taught me information that I have presented here, or taught me all sorts of things which informed the way I interpreted what I was learning about Mennonites, Canada, and ethnicity. Some of them helped in other ways. Many people told me more than I would ever have thought to ask, or gave me things that I had not even known I could use, but which sometimes turned out to be nearly invaluable. Vanity keeps me from listing some of these people as co-authors, but I do want to express my deep and joyful gratitude to them. I certainly could not have written a master's thesis unless they had helped me learn enough to do it.

I have read quite a few books in my life, but I have to admit that I have read the acknowledgements pages of very few of them. In hopes that people will actually read this one, I will dispense with detailed expressions of personal debt. I hope this will not seem to diminish the sincerity of my gratitude. Also, some people contributed profoundly vital elements to my project, and the contributions of others were merely excellent. I have not reflected that here, although I am aware of it.

Before I get to the big list, I want to mention that I owe a particular debt to David Bai, my supervisor, who gave me freedom and encouragement to do what I wanted, and who spent hours and hours discussing with me the themes that come up in this paper, and constructively criticizing ideas I proposed to him. I also want to thank Mike Evans, who became my co-supervisor later, who suggested a lot of useful and satisfying reading, and who made pointed and sophisticated criticisms of points I was trying or failing to make. Drs. Bai and Evans, my professor-friends, have been role models for me, even if I have failed to emulate them in many ways, and have also been my generous supporters.

In no particular order, and in one big run-on sentence, I would also like to thank Ted Klassen, Helene Friesen, who did many favours for me, and whom I will likely never repay, Rob and Linda Dueck, who also did many favours for me, and whom I hope I will someday be able to repay, Wendy Ens, Brad Reimer, Denise Ens, who proofread part of a rough copy of my thesis for me, Carol Toews, Wally Kroeker, John Bergen, who insisted repeatedly that I borrow what turned out to be an excellent book, thank you, John Elias and Mrs. Elias, Lois Bergen, Paul Driben, who suggested I read Barth, Victor Fast, Leo Driedger, who tersely criticized an early version of my research plan over the telephone for me, staff members at the Mennonite Heritage Centre, Len Barkman, Peter Peters, who not only gave me advice, but bought me a coffee, Roger Thiessen, Rose Wiebe, Gerhard Ens, who lent me books and made thoughtful comments about ideas I ran by him a couple of times, a secretary at Westgate Mennonite Collegiate, Peter Harms, Bruno Dyck, for suggesting some things that helped me get started in Winnipeg, Paul Friesen, many librarians in several libraries, Ardith Frey, Craig Campbell, who made insightful comments on a couple of occasions, Rod Wilson, Julie MacCaull, whose research suggestions would have helped me more at the time if I had been more ready for them, Adrienne Wiebe, Royden Loewen, Kim Mah, for being a sounding board for my ideas sometimes, Helmut Epp, a secretary at *Die Mennonitische Post,* and Evelyn Harms, who lent me her computer for a while, and to whom I never really showed much gratitude for that. There are many more, some of whom I can think of, and some whose help I have already forgotten.

One more important matter concerning my relationship with these people is that despite their contributions to it, the final construction of the text of the thesis is mine. All the faults, and any foolishness, a reader might find in the essay that follows are completely my own, and have nothing at all to do with the people whose names I have just listed.

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Introduction

Mennonite ethnic identity in Winnipeg today is both a positive reflection of the life that Mennonites there live now, and a compelling part of the means by which that life is constructed. Many influences combine to form modern Mennonite ethnic identity, including the Mennonite past, the values and ambitions of non-Mennonite Canadians and of the Canadian government, the lives and customs of Mennonites elsewhere, and most of all, the values, needs, habits, and ambitions of Winnipeg Mennonites themselves. In one way or another, all of those people contribute to the construction of Mennonite ethnic identities in Winnipeg. At the same time, Mennonites in Winnipeg are sometimes different from those others in some ways. While Mennonites are separate from other Canadians in some matters, that does not make them at all un-Canadian. Ethnic identity provides Mennonites with a meaningful social community and heritage which is more nearly culturally connected to themselves in some ways than some of their other identities, such as Canadian, are in some matters. Because that is so, the ideas associated with their ethnic identities influence the values and ambitions of individual Mennonites in some important and distinctive ways, and play a part in the formation of their lives.

It seems important to emphasize that one does not possess an ethnic identity so much as one participates in it. A little like wrestling, or singing in harmony, ethnicity is not something one could do well alone. In a way, ethnicity is like dancing meaningfully together. We weave and slide and bump and laugh our ethnicities into being in our own way, but also in a way that fits the dancing of our many partners. Being able to talk knowledgeably about a particular ethnic identity, or even somehow cataloguing people's characteristics, is not the same as understanding what it might be to maintain that certain kind of relationship with those people (Isajiw 1990:36). While people think and act cooperatively to create an identity that is meaningful for all of them, there is likely a fair bit of individual variation in the way they live (Barth 1969a:29). Maybe some people are not actually all that knowledgeable about the ethnic identity they nevertheless feel strongly, and maybe others are

ambivalent about expressing it, but that need not have much effect on how they and others identify them (Hansen 1952:494-496). Ethnicity can be half-articulated, and uncertainly focused, and most likely these days, amorphous, heterogeneous, controversial, or even inobviously existent (Appadurai 1996:41). Ethnicity can sometimes be both a reason and a context for celebrating, and maybe also a source of social tension or personal discomfort in some situations (Fishman 1989:25). Social organizations based on ideas about ethnicity can act as powerful collective resources for their members (Appadurai 1996:8).

A few characteristics identify ethnic identity and distinguish it from other forms of social organization. The most important aspect of anyone's ethnic identity is ascription (Barth 1969a:13). Supposing oneself to be Mennonite, or Tamil, or Basque, and being supposed by others to be just that, is the most basic essence of ethnic identity. Simultaneous with ethnic self-ascription is the dichotomy-forming realization that others are socially separate (Barth 1969a:10). That kind of 'us and them' notion can become a kind of moveable social boundary which people can mobilize in ways they might find useful at particular times (Nagata 1974:333). Ethnic identities and divisions need not be at all clear in the context of some social interactions, although they are quite clear in others (Barth 1969a:29). Ethnic solidarity and social discontinuity can be partly formed by an imagined community of the sort Anderson (1983) first described, partly through the existence of broad networks of personal relationships, and partly through people's relationship to sets of meaningful cultural symbols. Although scholars might disagree on the degree to which it is so, culture and ethnicity are always meaningfully related (Barth 1969a:15; Appadurai 1996:13). Thus, while ethnic ascription need not be objective, it usually seems to be in some way. Cultural representations and expressions of ethnic identity are often made using ethnic icons, such as religion, cuisine, or heritage, which help knowledgeable people recognize others' identities. Although one can change their ethnic identity during their lifetime, people are likely to learn their ethnic identities from their parents and their friends, and

therefore come to hold identities similar to those people's identities (Barth 1969a:22; Appadurai 1996:14).

James Lapp (1992:7), who was the General Secretary of the Mennonite Church, suggests Mennonites have been very interested in questions concerning their identity since the early 1980s. He supposes there has been a considerable decline in their obvious distinctiveness during the past few decades, and a parallel trend to join popular Christendom and the national culture.[1] Weaver (1988:125) proposes that the very fact Mennonites have been thinking so much about it suggests that some sense of Mennonite ethnic identity persists. Maybe their concern with questions of ethnic identity also suggests that Mennonites do not have as many answers for those questions as they wish they did, because Mennonites in Winnipeg live lives that are different from those of other Canadians in only a few ways now. Integration is one of the demands that both the Canadian state and the Canadian people, collectively, make on Canadians (Kymlicka 1998:5, 25). Mennonites, as Canadians, simultaneously demand those Canadian values and customs of others, and acquiesce to them themselves. Demands for integration, as opposed to assimilation, leave Mennonites enough room to be Mennonite in some meaningful ways, though. At the same time that they are Canadians, Mennonites are also different from other Canadians. Sally Falk Moore (1994:365) suggests that a lot can be learned about people, and about cultural meaning in their lives, from the disputed intersections of their interests and ambitions, and from the terms on which they negotiate those amongst themselves. A considerable portion of this essay will be preoccupied with exactly that: with people's intersecting, sometimes conflicting, ideas about Mennonite ethnicity in Winnipeg, Canada, and with what I have learned from Mennonites' various discussions of that topic.

There are many legitimate ways for Mennonites to think about and express their Mennoniteness these days. Some of the ways to express and interpret a Mennonite ethnic identity in Winnipeg are related to religious ideas, to interpretations of some Mennonite history, to ideas about heredity, to some

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[1] The Mennonite church is a North American organization. I do not know if Lapp's word 'the' refers to American or Canadian national culture.

aspects of Mennonite traditional culture, and to participation in some Mennonite institutions. I will not attempt to establish a definitive list, though, because the whole matter of what Mennoniteness is, I think in every aspect, seems to be negotiable, and under negotiation, on at least some level. Realizing that Mennonites are a diverse bunch of people is quite a different matter than watching the way Mennoniteness is negotiated, however indirectly or slowly, publicly or personally, by people with various views and ambitions. Three quick examples will show what I mean. One of the people I asked about Mennoniteness when I was researching this thesis made a dramatic statement about what he thought made one a Mennonite. He had three little booklets, one each entitled *Faith, Discipleship*, and *Community*. While looking steadily at me and speaking, he pressed the booklets firmly down on his desk one by one. He said something like, "This is what you need to know to be a Mennonite, Paul. Faith. Discipleship. Community. Read these, and you can learn. I can lend these to you. Can I give them to you? You can have them." Maybe foolishly, I turned down the offer of the books, so now I cannot even say much about what was in them, but the topics of those three booklets will come up again in my thesis. What that person was offering was really only one version of being Mennonite, though. Art DeFehr (1988:35) suggests ethnic Mennoniteness is hereditary. If it were, the issues would be simple. According to him (DeFehr, 1988:36), ethnic Mennoniteness need have nothing to do with one's Mennonite church. Another person told me that one would need to come from a Mennonite home, value Mennonite traditions, and belong to a Mennonite church to be a Mennonite. I think the three conceptions are quite different, but all of those statements seem earnest and frank to me, and so must all be equally valid. For those people, at least at those times, that was what was important about being Mennonite.

I hope my essay will go further than simply describing some of the range and substance of Mennonite identity, though. Barth (1969a:27) points out that some amount of cultural diversity need not lead anyone to doubt that they share an ethnic identity with some others. With that in mind, I will argue that this discussion of Mennonite identity is taking place not about whether people are

Mennonites or not, rather between Mennonites, about what it is to be Mennonite, and what it could and should be. Ethnic identities, including Mennonite ethnic identity, are always in process. In the past, Mennonite identity was tied quite closely to an agrarian lifestyle, distinctive language use, and social isolation, as well as religion (Loewen 1993a:176), but it has moved quite noticeably away from that now, to being expressed primarily through Mennonite religion (Redekop, J. 1987:57), institutional participation (Kraybill 1996:28), and by maintaining a relationship to certain meaningful aspects of Mennonite history (Driedger, 1980:132). This transition of Mennonite identity has been influenced significantly by the ambitions and preferences of Canadian Mennonites, and by the restrictions placed on them by Canadian nationalism and the economy. Sometimes ethnic change is easier to see when one has the perspective of history, but it is certainly also useful to try to examine that process as it is taking place in the present. Sometimes I will manage to guess why things are changing the way they are, and other times I will only be able to observe how they are changing, and what people see as the issues and alternatives.

The present exists in the context of historical experience, or as a product of historic events. While they are constructed in the present, modern Mennonite ethnic identities are in some ways continuous with past Mennonite identities. While the present is a product of the past, the interpretation of history is a reflection, or expression, of modern values and agendas (Alonso 1988:34). Mennonite history is interpreted differently now than it had been in the past. Winnipeg Mennonites seem to have a dual heritage that draws partly on the work ethic and creativity of the pioneers who established the first Mennonite communities on the Canadian prairie. Mennonite heritage also stems from the values, such as ideas about personal morality, peace-making, and personal volition, attributed to the Anabaptist reformers, whose social insularity lead to their development into a Mennonite people.

Mennonites in Winnipeg form an imagined community more or less of the sort Anderson (1983) has described. This community is formed partly from information that Mennonites learn about one another from their newspapers, and the books they read on Mennonite topics. Mennonites sponsor quite an

active press which tells them a great deal about the activities and ideas of other Mennonites. I will argue that imagined community is also partly formed through Mennonites' knowledgeable participation in institutions such as the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), and Mennonite Economic Development Associates. Mennonites learn a great deal about what other Mennonites are doing and thinking by volunteering in Mennonite institutions, and they learn a lot about what it is to be Mennonite that way, too. The Crosstown Credit Union, the membership of which is basically composed of Mennonites, also supports Mennonite imagined community because banks are an important part of life in the city today, and because this one actively expresses many Mennonite values. Just as there is a local Mennonite imagined community, Winnipeg Mennonites participate in others that include Mennonites in Canada, North America, and more, and of course also in the one that forms Canada.

Methodology

Wsevolod Isajiw (1990:36) has suggested there are two aspects of ethnic identity. External aspects refer to observable behaviour, such as language, social manner, and participation in ethnic organizations, such as churches or schools. The internal, subjective aspects of ethnic identity refer to mental images, ideas, attitudes and feelings. The two are interconnected, of course, but maybe not always interdependent. I took the huge majority of the information in my project from public materials, such as academic publications, newspaper articles, and the publicity documents Mennonite institutions put out to advertise themselves. The result is that my paper deals mostly with what Isajiw called the external aspects of ethnicity.

In Ana Maria Alonso's (1988:42) article about the relationship between history and state nationalism in northern Mexico, she calls such things as television, public spaces, museums, institutional education, political rhetoric, and advertising "sites of production of a national past." I think those kinds of things could just as well be called sites of production of an ethnic identity, if that were what were being produced there. In the case of Winnipeg Mennonites, I think ethnicity is partly produced in those sorts of places. In a sense, what I have here is a study of Mennonite's relationship to some public sites of the production of the external aspects of their ethnic identities. I have not attempted to describe all of Mennonite identity, but I have described some of that part of it.

People express themselves and represent themselves through their institutions, and they learn about themselves from their institutions, too (Alonso 1988:42), so those are useful things to study. Solidarity does not come from the circumstance of being collectively represented through some institution, nor from formal public statements made by institutions; solidarity comes from what people share. An institution that people value can build solidarity because they are sharing it (Douglas 1986:8-9), and if they value it partly because of its ethnic meaning, such an institution can build ethnic solidarity. While the institutions and the public statements they produce acquire their Mennoniteness from

Mennonite people, the institutions also teach Mennonites about themselves and each other, and I hope they have taught me something about Mennonites, too.

Most of what I read about Mennonites had been printed by Mennonite publishers. Nearly all of the authors of those works were themselves not only Mennonites, but ones regarded as knowledgeable, insightful, or maybe visionary in some way. Every writer has a point of view, and I wonder if the Mennonite literature disproportionately favours the church, since religious organizations sponsor, however directly or indirectly, a considerable portion of what is published by and about Mennonites. McCormack (1997:112) makes some reasonable and substantial criticisms of Regehr's (1996) post-war history of Mennonites, *Mennonites in Canada, 1939-1970,* for that reason, that his book is too preoccupied with the church. That book's source material reaches considerably deeper and broader than mine does, so I see it as reasonable to make the same criticism of my work. Because I have so little independent research to which to compare the existing literature, I cannot evaluate it at all well.

Some of the books and journal and newspaper articles I read were written about Mennonites in Winnipeg, or about particular institutions, but some others were written about Mennonites all over Canada, or in all of North America.[2] I tried to keep that in mind when I referred to those works, but it is difficult to say how that has affected my understanding of the situation in Winnipeg. The fact that publications draw those kinds of wide audiences partly suggests that they are relevant to those wide audiences, but I am not so familiar with Mennonites that I could always well say how or when there are significant differences between Mennonites in Winnipeg and elsewhere. Certainly, everything I read could be read by Mennonites in Winnipeg, and thereby enter their ethnic imagination, because I found all of it in libraries there.

I am mostly comfortable with my use of those materials, because the Mennonites in Winnipeg do not live in social or cultural isolation. I will demonstrate in several ways, at several points in my paper, that Mennoniteness

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[2] I cite Paul Toews' (1996) book a few times in my discussion of the Anabaptist vision, even though he was writing particularly about Mennonites in the United States.

in Winnipeg is indiscernibly and vitally tied to the lives and identities of Mennonites elsewhere. The relationship in this paper between Mennonite ethnicity and the city of Winnipeg is a little like conducting a study of birds flying over the prairie in spring by sitting on one little hill and watching them. The birds one would see there might fly all over the countryside, not just across that spot, so really the study could say quite a lot about birds on the prairie, and a report of the study could not reasonably be made without mention of that. At the same time, since all the observation was done only on the one hill, the study could very reliably discuss birds only there. The field research I did was done in Winnipeg, and although some of the examples I cite include activities that go beyond Winnipeg, none of them exclude Mennonites there, and some of what I draw from the literature and from history is quite exclusive to Mennonites in Winnipeg. Mennonite ethnicity in Winnipeg is both inextricably tied to Mennonite identity elsewhere, but also different in some ways. By discussing Mennonites in Winnipeg, I cannot help but reflect on Mennonites elsewhere, but whatever my paper suggests about Mennonites in other places, it is first of all, and most reliably, about Winnipeg.

My field research was concentrated among Mennonite public figures. I did about ten interviews, depending how one defines interview, with church pastors, business leaders, educators, and in-group politicians. I talked to several more people than that about my project, but I asked few thoughtful questions of people who were not accustomed to making thoughtful public statements about Mennonites or about being Mennonite. This is not because I presume there would be no significant difference between the views of people in positions of influence and the views of others, or because I thought the latter would have nothing interesting to say. The inadmirable explanation I will offer, rather, is that I was generally underqualified to have been engaging in fieldwork. I hoped those more public figures would have better interviewee skills, and that by talking to them, I might be able to get much of what I wanted to find without knowing how to look for it. My choice of interviewees reinforces the ethnic "sites of production" (Alonso 1988:42) bias that my basis in the Mennonite press brings into the paper. Those people were all figures, at some

level, within Mennonite institutions, and their conceptions of Mennoniteness must therefore have been tied to the same sites of production of Mennonite ethnicity as the literature I read.

The interviews were not particularly structured, and during some of them, the interviewees introduced as many themes as I did. I was glad when they did. Kemp and Ellen (1984:230) suggest that is the best way to gather information. Briggs (1986:117) argues that in order for people to communicate, information must necessarily be categorized and transformed into statements representative of the speakers knowledge, but not ever fully or perfectly expressive of it, so the communication in an interview never exactly represents matters as the speaker understands and feels them. Nevertheless, the advantage of the unstructured interview is that it gives the prerogative in organizing and categorizing information to the interviewee, who has a much more thorough knowledge of the subject matter than the interviewer likely ever will. Briggs (1986:124) goes on to suggest that attempts by an interviewer to structure conversations in too circumscribed a manner might result less importantly in the interviewee's ability to communicate being limited, than in the researcher's ability to learn from that interview being limited. A researcher who tries to control the categories of communication might remain trapped in his or her own categories, and therefore maybe poorly be able to understand the very goal of the research project, which is to learn meanings and relationships as the interviewee is describing them.

The topics included in each interview differed from one another, according to what I hoped an interviewee might know especially well, and what I hoped they might be interested in talking about. One consequence of that is that I do not have four or five individual's views of the same matter. Often I have only one considered personal opinion, plus a version or two of the issue that I gleaned from mostly academic publications. That makes my data thin and all of my conclusions weak, I know. I took notes during every interview, then recopied them immediately after. On that second record of the interview, I sometimes tried to fill in details I remembered, but had no time to jot down during the interview itself, and sometimes I made little notes about impressions I had

gotten, or the attitude with which certain statements seemed to have been made. I have not attributed comments that I cite in my thesis personally to the individuals who told me those things. This is not because I am ungrateful for the contributions they made. I gave everyone I interviewed the choice to have their names printed in the paper, or left out. Everyone chose to be left out.

Almost everything I have ever read about Mennonites, and about ethnicity, I read as a part of this project. I cannot say I understood the issues and relevant concepts well when I began. I hope I was able to read more perceptively and insightfully, and to discuss the matters more productively with my peers, later, after I had the lessons from the earlier books and discussions to help me. I wonder if I would have understood and recorded some of my earlier discussions and readings differently if I had known more when I first began. Maybe my learning process has introduced some interpretive inconsistency into my discussion, and into the way I thought about my data. Since my aim in writing this essay was to learn, that might not be a debilitating problem. If anyone were reading this essay with the goal of learning, though, it might become one.

Let me mention one more noteworthy thing about my research. I grew up in a Mennonite community, in a Mennonite family, and although I have no formal involvement with Mennonites now, I continue to keep social connections with them, and to form new ones. Further, some aspects of my personal identity, at least in some contexts, continue to draw on my Mennonite experiences and social relationships. My relationship to Mennonites made some aspects of my project quite efficient, but it certainly made some others unpleasant or intimidating in a way they would not likely have been for someone with greater emotional detachment from the material. That circumstance has obviously affected the character of this essay. Lila Abu-Lughod (1991:141) maintains that it is not necessary to worry that an indigenous anthropologist would likely be less able to maintain objectivity than an outsider would. Objectivity is a difficult challenge for everyone, and it is the responsibility of every academic writer to do the best they can. Everyone is an insider in some social place and must deal with the cultural baggage and political attitudes they have learned from

people there, so insider anthropologists are not different from others in that sense. Abu-Lughod (1991:142) also argues that indigenous anthropologists must often confront the local social politics and ethical problems of situations more squarely in their writing than outsiders do, because they are more closely socially connected to the subjects of the description than anthropologists who are merely visiting. On that count, I think I have been more of an outsider than a local, because I do not feel any generalized social responsibility to Mennonites that I think is different than the responsibilities any researcher has to the people they learn from and about.

My past experiences and insider knowledge about Mennonites have affected what information and insight I found interesting or important, and how I interpreted what I learned from my readings and my interviews. I think I was very ignorant about Mennonites and about ethnicity in Canada before I began the paper, but I had a certain amount of intuitive knowledge about both topics just the same. To some extent, the things I had known beforehand influenced the attitude with which I read certain books, or what I did or did not ask knowledgeable people about. Intuitive knowledge of the sort I have, in whatever quantity, can be as legitimate as the directly attributable results of research (Davis 1984:304), so on one level, my experiential insider knowledge should not affect the character of the paper at all. Further, I tried never to presume to know about Mennonites when describing my case study, and I hope never gave myself unchecked authority. Although some of the interpretations of data are mine entirely, I always cited some source where I found that data, itself.

Following Moore's (1994:365) conception of the anthropology of events, or event anthropology, it seems reasonable to suppose that things that Mennonites are doing separately from other Canadians, or in a different way than other Canadians do similar things, are indicators of the existence of a Mennonite ethnic identity, and also likely sources of insight about it. My description of Mennonite ethnicity will draw mostly from accounts of the way Mennonites are doing things, and examinations of the meanings to be found in those events, and much less from any empirical measurements of Mennoniteness. The possibly fluid contextual variation of ethnic identity makes

me doubt the appropriateness of statistical models of studying ethnicity. This is not to say that useful knowledge is not produced by such studies, and Clammer (1984:76) makes a good argument in support of the potential of combining anecdotal evidence with quantitative surveys, especially in complex urban environments. The serious weaknesses of methods that rely on questionnaires and statistical measurements seriously limit their possible effectiveness in supporting the goals of anthropological inquiry, and my goals in this project. Those techniques seem like inappropriate methods for me to conduct my research because every person is different, so the same questions will have different meanings for each participant in the survey, and the answers they are able to give will have different meanings, too, and rest in the contexts of different accumulations of cultural experience. Researchers can construct descriptions of ethnicity by asking the same questions of a large number of people, and then creating categories for their answers and examining the relationships between those categories. Those categories invariably under-represent cultural diversity in the population being studied, though, and when scholars describe ethnicity by comparing their categories, they force themselves to formalize under-representations of the diversity of cultural experience and meaning that the survey population actually represents (Clammer 1984:77; Briggs 1986:112, 116). Although it is difficult to come to an understanding of the scope of that variation through any means (Clammer 1984:77), and I surely will not boast that I have done it here, it seems to me that the best social studies I have read left space in their description for personal variation, both among people, and in individuals, themselves. That means the description will be looser, but no one fits any categories very well. My essay will not be able to suggest any conclusive results, the way the authors of quantitative studies can, but I hope it will allow the reader to imagine personal characters and activities, and personal inconsistencies, and how those combine to form Mennonite ethnic identity, in a way those more statistical studies do not.

Ethnicity as a Concept

The Relationship between Conceptual Writing and Data

In my paper, I am using the term ethnicity as a heuristic device to describe what people are doing in the real world. Ethnicity itself is, of course, created popularly by people who use it as a practical category for ordering their social lives. That is the ethnicity reflected in the writings of scholars, and of their students (Gellner 1994:45), but even the best scholarly writing about ethnic identities is not more than an oversimplified representation of the reality. Unlike scholars of ethnicity, though, people do not commonly spend time in detached contemplation of their own ethnic identities (Barth 1969a:29), and while that does not make ethnicity less relevant to their daily lives, it creates an important place which scholarly writing is especially well suited to occupy productively. I wonder if my academic paper relates to ethnicity in approximately the way that a hundred-page description of the sound of Miles Davis' trumpet-playing relates to music. For someone who had heard jazz, but not Miles Davis, a paper like that might give them an idea what Miles sounded like. Even for someone familiar with Miles' playing, reading about it might help them understand or appreciate it in new ways. Someone who was quite unfamiliar with the sound of jazz might get less out of a paper like that, but after having read it, the sound might acquire particular meaning when they did hear it. Similarly, I am not recreating ethnicity on paper here. I am only talking about it.

My description of Mennonites will not prove the worth of my conceptual description of ethnicity, nor is my conceptual writing useful for demonstrating that my interpretations of the data are in any sense correct. The conceptual description of ethnicity is useful for understanding how different aspects of Mennonite identity fit together, and for comparing this essay about Mennonites to descriptions of other people. If there were a valid scientific theory of ethnicity, the topic could be described and people compared to one another systematically using that theory, and accumulations of data could be used to evaluate the theory. Science does not seem to be an appropriate method by which to study ethnicity, though, because anyone's ethnic identity can vary

contextually (Nagata 1974:333), and the meaning or usefulness of a shared ethnic identity is not uniformly conceived by the people sharing it (Appadurai 1996:33). Nevertheless, ethnicity is easier to understand if one compares examples, and a good way to make comparisons is by forming conceptualizations. My paper is useful for helping readers think about Mennonites, and I hope also to help them understand Mennonites, but I would not try to defend many of my interpretations as true.

A Brief Definition

It is important to keep in mind that there is no ideal or typical ethnic identity that obviously and clearly exhibits all of some list of traits that identify something as such (Barth 1969a:29). There is a great deal of variation among the world's people, and many kinds of social relationships and cultural symbols contribute to people's ethnic identities. Nevertheless, it would be very useful to have some theoretical guidelines for discerning social organizations based on ethnicity from other kinds, whether those others be religions that unite people regardless of ethnicity, extended family lineages, political organizations such as the British Commonwealth or the Association of South East Asian Nations, or socio-economic classes.

Ethnicity is most of all a cooperative social activity. It is the formation of meaningful and useful social bonds through which questions of identity can be answered. Through ethnic identity, the answer to the question "Who are you?" can proudly become "I am a Mennonite." The most important aspect of anyone's ethnic identity is ascription (Barth 1969a:13). Supposing oneself to have an ethnic identity, and being simultaneously supposed by others to be that kind of person, is the most basic essence of ethnic identity. Ethnic self-ascription invariably includes the realization that others are different (Barth 1969a:10). This dichotomous notion of an ethnic 'us' and 'them' can become a kind of mutable, permeable social boundary which people can make use of in different ways at different times (Nagata 1974:333). While ethnic difference might be unclear or unimportant in the context of some social interactions, it might be quite clear in others, and is presumed always to exist (Barth

1969a:29). Although ethnic discrimination can become brutal (Appadurai 1996:146), it is also true that ethnically different individuals can cooperate regularly, respectfully, and quite indifferently to one another's ethnic differences without devaluing their identities in any way (Barth 1969a:34; Kymlicka 1998:5).

Ethnicity is meaningfully related to culture in some significant way (Barth 1969a:15). Cultural representations and expressions of ethnic identity are made using cultural icons, such as language, a characteristic cultural tradition, or public institutions, by which knowledgeable people can recognize others' identities and appropriately feel social solidarity or difference with them. It is possible for people to switch from one ethnic identity to another, or to add one, during their lifetime, but it is pertinent to keep in mind that people learn their ethnic identities from their parents and neighbours beginning when they are young, and are therefore likely always to feel ethnic sameness with those people (Barth 1969a:22).

Theories of Ethnicity

My conceptual discussion of ethnicity is a synthesis of smaller or greater parts of a few people's writing about ethnicity. The two authors whose works are primary to my understanding of ethnicity are Fredrik Barth, whose classic *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries* (1969a) I probably cite more often than I cite any other conceptual work, and Arjun Appadurai, whose reconceptualization of ethnicity in his book *Modernity at Large* (1996) I found inspiring and insightful. I have tried to combine what I perceived as the strengths of those works, so that they could augment one another's potential and minimize one another's weaknesses. I have added insights from Benedict Anderson's (1983) book *Imagined Communities* and Judith Nagata's (1974) article *"What is a Malay?,"* among many others. I think those authors' ideas can be made constructively compatible, and I have tried to blend their influence in a way I hope has allowed me to understand a complex topic in a way that has intellectual potential and flexibility.

I think Barth (1969a) articulates his conception of ethnicity thoroughly, and in an orderly way. He describes with considerable clarity how he believes

ethnic identity is constructed and what role it plays in peoples' lives. For the most part, that is the great strength of his book. His ideas can be improved in a couple of ways, though. It seems to me that Barth over-values the significance of ethnic boundaries in supporting identity, and correspondingly neglects the importance of perceived or ascribed social solidarity. In my understanding of ethnicity, people cooperate and feel togetherness because they want to be together, not because they want to be separate from others. Admitted, Barth lists the examination of boundaries as his third goal, after the aim to demonstrate that ascription is the primary basis of ethnic identity, and that diverse processes can work to generate and maintain ethnic identities among people (Barth 1969a:10). Addressing existing anthropological studies of ethnicity, he writes that he wants to "shift the focus of investigation from internal constitution and history of separate groups to ethnic boundaries and boundary maintenance" in mutable groups (Barth 1969a:10). Maybe it was appropriate at the time Barth was writing to emphasize what he did, since, as Barth (1969a:9) himself points out, too much anthropology in those days rested on the premise "that there are aggregates of people who essentially share a common culture" and that these aggregates were discrete from all others. His description of permeable, shifting ethnic boundaries surrounding people who might very well be culturally diverse (Barth 1969a:10, 12) was an improvement on that old islands-of-humanity model, but might not have gone far enough, nor in exactly the right direction.

Appadurai (1996:14) is also talking about difference that is linked to identity, as in his statement: "the idea of ethnicity I propose takes the conscious and imaginative construction and mobilization of differences as its core." He goes on from there to say that ethnic identity is constructed not from the culture of any group of persons, since that might well be "a virtually open-ended archive" of cultural diversity, rather it is composed of some selected aspects of peoples' cultural commonalities that then come to constitute the diacritics of identity (Appadurai 1996:14). Appadurai never does, but I will be referring to those meaningful cultural commonalities as ethnic icons. By associating ethnicity with selected meaningful cultural sameness, and then difference as

merely a product of the lack of sameness, ethnic identity seems, more appropriately, like a social activity, and less like a social category. Demonstrating that will be one of the main goals of my essay. Ethnicity includes hues of both social activity and social category, but it seems good to order their importance that way. This is really not far from Barth's (1969a:15) assertion that "socially relevant factors alone become diagnostic for membership ...," nor from his description of Pathan identity being based in cultural commonalities despite considerable differences (1969b:119-122). Appadurai's improvement is that his conception generally moves the emphasis away from ethnic icons as items useful for boundary maintenance, and toward their meaningful contribution to the collective awareness of similarity. Ethnic boundaries can be allowed to become profoundly unclear if ethnicity is conceived in this way. This seems to match the social reality that Appadurai (1996:44) finds in the world today, and which I have found among Mennonites in Winnipeg. Mennonites are diverse among themselves (Regehr 1996:14) and culturally integrated with other Canadians (Sawatsky 1994:104), so it seems compelling to me to say their ethnic bonds come more from ascribed solidarity and less from perceived collective difference from others.

If Appadurai's new version of the subject were simply superior to others, of course I could just follow him exclusively. There are weaknesses in Appadurai's book, though, and I would like to attempt to address one of them. Appadurai's (1996:13-14) stated goal is to replace a conception of ethnicity which "rests on some sort of extension of the primordial idea of kinship," with one that rests in cultural markers. I am all in favour of discrediting the numerous primordialist myths that remain current, but there seems to be a way to do that while reflecting the reality and potential of ethnicity more accurately than Appadurai's overly culture-centred arguments have done. One of Barth's (1969a:14) goals was to demonstrate that "ethnic categories take cultural differences into account," but that one should "assume no simple one-to-one relationship between ethnic units and cultural similarities and differences." The big difference between Barth's (1969a:14) and Appadurai's (1996:14) arguments about the relationship between culture and ethnicity is the place they

give culture in deciding identity. While Appadurai (1996:14) gives some subset of popularly selected, meaningfully different cultural markers absolute predominance in forming people's identities, Barth (1969a:14) describes cultural matters as supportive or representative of ethnic identities, which he asserts are formed primarily through ascription. I find Barth's arguments more compelling.

Appadurai's theory seems to stumble on its need for cultural dissimilarity to distinguish people with different identities. Nagata (1974:333) has pointed out that the same culture can be attached to different ethnic identities. Kallen (1977:107) says of many Canadian Jews, and Matthiasson (1983:340) of Icelandic Manitobans, that they are so culturally integrated with other Canadians that it is a difficult matter finding anything that makes some individuals different at all, yet their ethnic identities need not be at all in doubt. Further, while ethnicity is itself a cultural construct, Barth (1969a:13) argues that, in some cases, a shared ethnic identity unites culturally diverse people in a way that Appadurai's conception might not obviously allow. People who ascribe the same ethnic identity to themselves and one another might each be aware of some of the cultural similarities that can mark that ethnic identity, and personally exhibit some of those cultural characteristics, but not others. An accumulation of such culturally similar people, with similar understandings about how culture is meaningfully tied to their shared ethnic identities is what forms the collection of ethnic icons that can then be associated with that ethnic identity (Barth 1969a:29). That means that if people A are culturally like people B in some ways, and Bs are culturally like people C in some ways, but not in the ways they are like As, the three might still sometimes consider themselves ethnically connected. Thus it is still collective awareness of similarity that people relate to their ethnic identities, as I argued just above, but it is similarity that is contextually interpreted, and selectively ascribed in relation to ethnic identities that might be presupposed. Diversity of that sort can underlie ethnic identities which can nevertheless be powerful social forces. Since that is the case, it seems unreasonable to speak about groups, or about ethnic unity, and I will try to avoid those terms. People are not bounded into groups, nor necessarily

united in any particular matter, despite that they share a compelling ethnic identity with one another, and no matter how important a part of their lives that identity is.

Ascribed Membership

When I asked a few Mennonite community leaders and institutional organizers what they supposed made their institutions distinctly Mennonite, one of the common answers went something like "because we are Mennonites doing it." That answer suggests to me that for them, identity comes more from ascription than from anything else. Barth (1969a:14) argues that the most important criterium for deciding someone's ethnic identity is that that person, themself, and others, believe that person to have that identity. Those others who are doing the ascribing might be people who share the same ethnic identity, or they might not. Ethnic solidarity comes partly from people's own, and others', acknowledgements that they are in fact somehow separate from any ethnic others, and ethnically tied to one another. Every ethnic identity has a name, and people apply that name to themselves (Hutchinson and Smith 1996:6). Ascription can be a tacit acknowledgement, but people are generally vocal about their own ethnicity when it is to their advantage to make it public, so it need not be (Tambiah 1994:430).

Barth (1969a:13; 1969b) shows that ascription is flexible and variable. His example of this relates to Pathan identity in the 1960s, in an area spanning the Afghanistan-Pakistan border, where some people were culturally quite Punjabi (1969a:13), Baluch, or Persian (1969b:125, 129). Barth found he was able to argue successfully with Pathans that other, culturally quite distinct, territorially removed people, also conceiving of themselves as Pathans, were indeed who they said they were. Local Pathans had at first disagreed, but Barth countered that it was environmental circumstance that forced the other Pathans to change their lifestyle, and pointed out that certain meaningful cultural attitudes and practices also continued to make them the same. For the Pathans with whom Barth was speaking, then, the Pathan identity of the other Pathans came from those people's own self-ascription, evidenced by the important

cultural similarities that Barth pointed out, and despite the significant cultural differences that divided people.

Maybe it has become clear already, but let me point out that much of the logic involved in questions concerning ethnic identity and ethnic meaning is circular. One can follow a circuit around the argument that we become who we are because we believe that is who we are, and that we continue to be that as long as we continue to believe it, and that is why we are who we are. In fact, Barth (1969a:30) argues that ethnic categories that cease to be self-fulfilling will simply cease to exist. For example, and maybe stated less cryptically, if Mennonites, or a particular individual who had been thinking of themselves as Mennonite, ceased to believe that their own actions and attitudes were ethnically meaningful on Mennonite terms, they might simply cease to be Mennonite. The need for ethnic identity to be self-fulfilling means that we are always both becoming and being who we are.

Ethnic self-recognition and the recognition of others as distinct are simultaneous (Fishman 1989:33). One cannot be a Mennonite without realizing that other people exist, and that those are not Mennonites. One of Barth's main arguments (1969a:10) is that ethnic distinctions are formed from ongoing processes of imagined and practical exclusion and incorporation of people. Ethnicity invariably forms 'us and them' dichotomies which lump everyone on earth who is not ascribed the 'us' identity into the 'them' category. For anyone who remains ignorant of the ethnic others, these sorts of dichotomies can make other people seem like members of corporate groups populated by stereotypical people, maybe more or less indiscernible from one another, or even apparently lacking a little in personal volition. Knutsson (1969:92) demonstrates that with his description of Arsi attitudes toward Shoa, Galla, and Amhara farmers, who were culturally quite different from each other, but were commonly lumped together by pastoralist Arsi. A simple Canadian example of a 'them' category is world music, which is used as a label simultaneously for all of the folk, popular, and classical musics of everyone in the world except those customarily associated with the European-derived culture of North America (which is us). Although the boundaries of what is Canadian and what is

American or classically European are not clear, Celtic and Continental folk music, as well as North American aboriginal music are usually put into the 'world' category. The only things that do not seem to be world music are the aristocratic and high church musics of historical Europe, and some of the musical genres developed during the twentieth century in North America.

This does not mean that there need be any formalized or uniformly conceived social boundary between people. It means that when people imagine their ethnic community, it sort of seems as if there were one. Disjunctures in the cultural patterns that approximately and unevenly coincide with ethnic identity and difference might be difficult to discern in some situations (Eidheim 1969:39), but the confidence that people have in the validity of their dichotomies, and the constructive and destructive potential of those ideas, need not be less because of it. That notions of 'us' and 'them' might be fairly vague and plastic in particular contexts, does not mean they do not exist in the popular consciousness (Barth 1969a:29). Mennonites can formalize a kind of relationship to certain other Mennonites through baptism,[3] but I will show later in this paper that the matter of who is a Mennonite is not at all as simple as that. Despite the actual ambiguity of ethnic identity, inclusion and exclusion remain important concepts in ethnic identity formation.

Perceived ethnic boundaries can harden in certain circumstances. When people, particularly minorities, feel some external threat to their way of life, high social value can come to be placed on social loyalty and reliability, often expressed through conformity and demands for conformity (Barth 1969a:37). This point is particularly relevant to Mennonite history, both in the years after their arrival in Russia (Urry 1989:67), and after their arrival in Canada in the 1870s (Ens 1996:9), although it is no longer a salient or practical issue (Sawatsky 1994:104). Ethnic boundaries might become most inflexible and impermeable during ethnic wars, which are certainly external threats. Even so, as one can see in the examples Partos (1997:120) gives of the wars which followed the collapse of the Yugoslav state, where Bosniaks fought on the side

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[3] They can formalize their relationships to other Canadians by marking in censi or paying taxes.

of Croatians, and Croatians fought with Serbs, against Croatia, these matters need not become absolute, even then.

Fields of Communication and Imagination

As is common in discussions of ethnicity (Nagata 1974:333; Eidheim 1969:39), Mennonites often find it difficult to know just who is a Mennonite and who is not, or why it might be so in any particular case (Sawatsky 1991:115; Ross 1988:271). The ways people conceive of their own identity, and the contexts in which they might feel or express it vary (Nagata 1974:333). The generally apparent cultural Canadianness of most Mennonites in Winnipeg (Sawatsky 1994:104) only makes uncertainties about Mennoniteness more difficult to sort out. Further complicating the situation for Winnipeg Mennonites is the fact that most of the Mennonites in Winnipeg have never actually met the huge majority of the other Mennonites there, and interact regularly or directly with only a tiny minority of them. Just because most Mennonites' interactions are not regular or direct does not mean that they are not meaningful, though. This essay will surely show that being a Mennonite is a meaningful part of many people's lives. Rather than being bounded by social disjuncture, as it once was (Ens 1994a:44), though, Mennonite community today is formed, to a considerable extent, in the manner described in Benedict Anderson's (1983) book, *Imagined Communities*. Many of the internal social bonds that form the Mennonite community, as well as many of the social boundaries that separate it from the rest of Canada, are produced in people's imagination, guided by public knowledge disseminated mostly by the communications media, but also in other ways. Anderson's (1983:15) unit for the imagined community is the nation, but Appadurai (1996:31) applies the imagined community to ethnicity, and so will I.

Anderson (1983) showed how community could be represented to people as if it were close and united, even when that is not exactly the case. Indeed, an imagined community can become a natural reality for people. Anderson (1983:30) proposed that certain constructions of the communications media and common knowledge allow, or even encourage, people to imagine that social relationships exist between themselves and many unknown others

who are like them. While some ethnic communities are based more on interconnecting networks of interpersonal relationships (Breton 1964:194), many are also expressed and represented to a considerable degree through frameworks of imagined community. While people in such an imagined community may not be in direct communication with one another, their sense of community is strong enough that they are capable of being moved to collective action on matters of shared interest (Appadurai 1996:8).

The knowledge that supports imagined communities can be acquired in a few ways. Anderson (1983:41) maintained that imagined communities are created by public communications media, such as books and newspapers. Times have changed, and electronic media such as television, radio, and the Internet are also key to the generation of feelings of ethnic community now (Appadurai 1996:35). In addition to that, I am sure that participation in institutions, the membership in which can be ethnically limited, can also contribute to the perpetuation of imagined communities. The public knowledge one learns by watching television news broadcasts or by reading newspapers published for ethnic audiences is in some ways very similar to what can be gained by seeing, or indirectly perceiving, what others are doing, and how that is the same or complimentary to what one is doing in that institution oneself. For example, volunteering for the Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS), and seeing for oneself what unknown other Mennonites have already done must have an effect on one's sense of Mennoniteness which is greater and different than either reading about MDS in the paper or simply meeting those other volunteers at a party and gaining a good impression of them. Thus I think institutional participation is also a way to learn about and develop a feeling of connection to people one has not actually ever met. Re-encountering in the newspaper activities one has already witnessed somehow by participating in institutions only likely serves to reinforce the sense of community that the communications media also generate.

Part of what forms one's identity is also the style in which community is imagined (Anderson 1983:15; Alonso 1988:42). As opposed to gaining knowledge about one's ethnic community through electronic media or word of

mouth, for example, the very circumstance that one typically learns about one's imagined community by participating in ethnic institutions can be an aspect of how that community is imagined to be constituted. Further, just as one contributes to the imagined community of others by being written about in the press, one's participation in ethnic institutions can provide others with evidence of the values and activities of members of their community. Maybe Mennonites who usually only meet other Mennonites on Mennonite terms when they are at church together imagine Mennonite community to be quite like a church.

The residents of the imagined community are the people, either individually or collectively, who are directly or indirectly made known to one another as such. These people need not be in any way tied to territory, nor do they need to reside proximally to one another (Appadurai 1996:15). It may well be common knowledge both that the community includes some people who are rarely and only indirectly described in the media, and rarely participate in ethnic activities, and also that some of the people who are described in, or consume, ethnic media could not be considered members of the imagined community (Anderson 1983:36). Readers might not know one another, or the actors in the newspaper articles, but they are nevertheless confident that those people exist, and that they participate in some sort of meaningful relationships within the imagined community (Anderson 1983:39). I suspect that many of the Mennonites in Winnipeg have never met Art Defehr, or Helmut Harder, or Aiden Schlichting Enns, yet feel familiar with them somehow, because they have read about them, or articles by them, in their regular papers.

The imagined community is not exactly the group of people who produce and consume information through those media. Rather, it is the social world as they imagine it exists, knowing the things that they have learned through those media. It is the people, but also their relationships to one another, and the known and foreseeable developments of those relationships. Reading the same stories in regular newspapers, or the same history books at school, provides the members of those readerships with a similar knowledge base and sense of shared experience, and therefore sameness (Anderson 1983:39). Cooperating in the same organizations, and hearing about others who

volunteer there does the same. In the case of Mennonite periodicals, the readers are almost all Mennonites, and the news being covered has been created mostly by them, and is likely of particular interest only to them. When Mennonites think of the Mennonite world outside their own immediate personal acquaintance, Anderson (1983:39) would say they surely think about a world that resembles what has been described for them in the papers they have read.

The distribution of public knowledge which contributes to the imagined community overlays a complex web of personal relationships (Appadurai 1996:33). I think Mennonites in Winnipeg do not primarily organize their social community from personal relationships the way their ancestors in rural villages did, but personal social relationships form a vital component of the Mennonite community now, too. Some of those relationships are with family members, others with close friends, and some with casual acquaintances. Friends and acquaintances might maintain networks of relationships patterned similarly to one another's, but networks that probably do not overlap entirely, or maybe hardly overlap at all. Everyone's network of family, friends, and acquaintances certainly includes some people who are complete strangers to each other. The end product is a broad, deeply overlapping network of networks which actually includes everyone imagined to belong to the ethnic community (Herzfeld 1997:6; Appadurai 1996:33).

Another aspect of imagined community relates to measured time. Participants in the imagined community can compare their own activities to the activities of others at a particular moment in history. News media portray images of moments in calendrical time, and provide people with the awareness of the way it is being spent by people in other places, and the way events transpire in relation to one another. Additionally, many of the people in the imagined community read the same things in the paper at roughly the same time, so reading the paper becomes a familiar regular ritual which supports group solidarity (Anderson 1983:31, 39). Presumably someone was thinking of this when they designed that advertisement in the *Mennonite Reporter* (25 (13):12, for example) that said "Don't feel guilty relaxing! Every two weeks Mennonites all over Canada sit down, relax, and read Mennonite Reporter."

Anderson never puts much emphasis on other kinds of simultaneous activities, but I think that ritual activities can make a considerable contribution to an imagined community. Knowing that other people, all connected by ethnic identity, are doing about the same thing at about the same time, in about the same way, maybe for many of the same reasons, can also make one feel like a part of a community. An example of that might be Canadians watching the same televised hockey game on Saturday nights. For Mennonites, as I will describe later, attending Sunday morning church services might provide them with something like this.

Ethnicity and Culture

Because of the uneven yet vital interconnection of ethnicity and culture, the two can become difficult to discern conceptually. Quoting Salzman's (1999:93) definition, a "culture is not so much a highly integrated complex of elements forming a seamless, unitary whole, as it is a limited set of diverse and alternative ways of thinking, assessing, relating to space, responding to the environment, organizing people, making a living, establishing security, dealing with threats, and thus dealing with the flow of events." Culture is a practical and meaningful way to understand and organize the collective living of life. Ethnicity is much less grand or encompassing than that. Whereas human social interactions of all sorts, as well as understandings of those interactions, are culturally influenced to whatever degree, ethnicity is only one cultural means for organizing social interactions within the context of nations and states. Ethnicity is an agreed-upon way of practically and meaningfully channeling social relationships (Appadurai 1996:139, 146; Barth 1969a:15).

I have already stated that ethnic solidarity can exist despite the absence of many cultural commonalities among people. The inverse can also be true, so that despite whatever cultural commonalities might be obvious among people, a shared ethnic identity, in itself, must be recognized among them before such an identity can exist (Barth 1969a:13). Shared cultural traits do not need to imply a shared ethnic identity. Barth (1969a:32-33) argues that such an absence of marked cultural differences between people does not necessarily correlate in

any way with a reduction in the organizational relevance of ethnic identities, though, and ethnicity in such a situation might have just as much social importance as if the people were clearly distinct. Eidheim's (1969) description of Norwegians and Coast Lapps, and Matthiasson's (1983) article about Icelandic Manitobans, lead me to agree that it is so. Local people might nevertheless be easily able to ascribe ethnic membership to each individual in their circle of acquaintance in situations where an outside observer might have difficulty in finding objective cultural differences between them (Eidheim 1969:39). Although ethnicity is meaningfully related to cultural similarity and difference, it is also in many ways free of it.

When ethnic meaning is ascribed to cultural activities, those become ethnically meaningful activities, and ethnic solidarity and difference might then be expressed through them. Those kinds of meaningful aspects of culture, such as language, a way of dancing, or a particular manner of butchering livestock, are used to signal an ethnic identity (Barth 1969a:14; Appadurai 1996:14). Mike Evans (pers. com., 2000) suggested I refer to those ethnically meaningful aspects of culture as ethnic icons, and I will. Icons are meaningful in a couple of ways. They symbolically connect modern and past cultures, simply by being meaningfully present in both (Herzfeld 1986:401).[4] As Shils (1971:130) argues, part of the meaning in our lives can come from our sense of connection with the past. Maybe more importantly, though, icons can reduce cultural diversity to simpler single units for representative utility. People are diverse and social relationships are complicated, and ethnic icons such as religion are complex, too, and unevenly shared among a population. Nevertheless, some meaningfully identifiable impression of an ethnic icon can represent people to one another in a simple and compelling way that can help support solidarity among them as something natural (Herzfeld 1986:402; 1997:71). For example, two strangers meet on an airplane in Rudy Wiebe's novel *Blue Mountains of China* (1970:188), and their attitudes toward one another change immediately

[4] Herzfeld is writing about national icons, not explicitly ethnic icons. As I will explain later, it is not inappropriate to transfer his insights to my topic, here, since nationalism is a kind of ethnicity.

when they learn one another's Mennonite names.[5] The sight or sound of something iconic evokes some greater or smaller part of one's ethnic experience, or of one's understanding of some ethnic others. The reason that people can both share iconic meaning and perceive it differently from one another is that each person relates iconic meaning to their personal ethnic experience, which is as different as people are. Icons can even have different meaning in relation to identity for the same people under different circumstances (Schwimmer 1986:363), but still remain compellingly meaningful. Icons become a sort of cultural idiom for expressing ethnic bonds. Participating in ethnically iconic cultural activities, or just understanding them, can become a simulacrum of social interaction (Gellner 1994:vii; Herzfeld 1997:6). A last thing to keep in mind is that icons come and go with time (Voigt 1986:399), and that what is iconically Mennonite now need not always have been.

Ethnic icons need not be complex matters, basic to people's ways of life, as language and religion are. Simple flags are very common icons (Foster 1991:239). What good ethnic icons do have to be is emotional and symbolically fertile, as language and religion are, so that their meaning can be applied flexibly and compellingly to many aspects of life (Keohane 1997:28). As an example, Adams (1998:331) describes Toraja *tongkonan,* which are ornate, highly pitched house fronts which functions as an ethnic icon among Toraja people in Indonesia. Not only are *tongkonan* distinctive to the Toraja, but the various images that decorate each one resonate with meanings related to political authority, economic success, and religious meaning from Torajan culture, especially from the past. Toraja can therefore feel a connection to *tongkonan*, and through them to one another, on different levels, maybe all at once. Individual Torajans might have different ideas about *tongkonan*, but *tongkonan* can remain meaningfully Torajan for all of them just the same. *Tongkonan* can be taken out of spatial context, to cosmopolitan Indonesian

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[5] I will argue later that ancestry, and therefore patrilineally inherited names, is iconic for Mennonites.

cities, for example, and used symbolically without becoming less ethnically meaningful.

There are many conceivable examples of the sorts of images or cultural values and practices that might come to support and represent ethnic identity (Gellner 1994:35). Some common ones are the language people commonly speak amongst themselves (Fishman 1989:27), their customary manner of dress, or domestic architecture and decoration (housebarns, pueblos, longhouses) (Barth 1969a:14), or cuisine (Wilk 1999:244). It might include the way families are organized, religion, patterns of political organization, or characteristic customs or etiquette, such as handshakes, bows, or shoulder touches as methods of greeting (Siverts 1969:111). People might believe ethnicity to be tied to territory of residence (Blom 1969:80). People's typical economic activity might also mark identity. Knutsson (1969:90) reports that was common in southern Ethiopia in the 1960s, where Arsi identity was tied closely to cattle herding. People who owned no cattle were not regarded as 'real' Arsi, even if their parents had been Arsi, and despite that their names continued to be recorded in Arsi genealogies. Maybe the absence of some typical cultural trait could suggest one's ethnic identity to knowledgeable others (Triandafyllidou 1998:596). Urry (1999:504) suggests that the absence of Roman Catholic crucifixes on roadsides in Mennonite areas of southern Manitoba mark the boundaries of Mennonite and Franco-Manitoban districts, which are otherwise indiscernible driving through them on the highway. Cultural meanings ascribed to aspects of people's physical appearance, such as stature, skin colour, or the shape of their face, might become ethnically iconic. Perceived ancestry is also a common aspect of ethnic identity (Fishman 1989:25). These last two are racist, of course, and without needing to condone the tolerance of racism in any way, it is important to be aware that these are commonly ascribed roles as markers of ethnicity (Herzfeld 1986:402). Questions about whether the sharing of cultural values is the product of shared ethnicity, or whether it is a precondition to ethnic association, are not relevant to the observation that ethnic icons exist, nor to the observation that ethnicity is based in ascription.

There is no place in this essay where I run conclusively through any list of Mennonite ethnic icons. I will discuss people's relationships to a few of them later in the paper, and say some things about the way people's different ideas about their ethnic identities affect their relationship to other Mennonites. For Mennonites, some icons are the Mennonite religion (Redekop, J. 1987:57), history (Driedger 1980:132), the values and activities of a number of Mennonite institutions (Kraybill 1996:28), ideas about ancestry (Driedger 1990:63; DeFehr 1988:35), language (Rempel 1996:6; WMES 1997:5), and also cuisine (Coggins 1997b:10; Ens, Anna 1996:16). McCormack (1997:112) refers briefly to Mennonite "aesthetic cultural forms," and Tiessen (1988:240, 249) talks about a Mennonite style of art that makes mundane, commonplace items complex and exotic. Maybe there is an iconically Mennonite aesthetic taste, but I will not be discussing it. Maybe their music is iconic for Mennonites, too. A non-Mennonite to whom I once mentioned my thesis topic, which is not music, responded immediately with a smile so big it lifted not just her face, but her whole body up just a little. She told me Mennonites sing so wonderfully. I will not be discussing Mennonite music much, though. Maybe ideas related to mutual aid, service, and volunteering are iconic for some Mennonites (Redekop, Ainlay and Siemens 1995:24; Kauffman and Driedger 1991:88), and I will talk about those themes, but never really in terms of iconicity. Icons are unevenly shared and defined by people, so discussing them conclusively is difficult.

Although it might be for some, ethnicity does not have to be a daily exercise in order to be an important aspect of one's life. For example, maybe someone who feels Mennonite knows a couple of Mennonites, and eats komst borscht[6] twice a year. For them, eating komst borscht those two times a year can be an adequately meaningful Mennonite activity, and can give them the feeling of being associated with Mennonites whom they know also eat komst borscht from time to time.

In just the way culture is unevenly shared (Salzman 1999:93), it is safe to presume that ethnic icons will cluster in meaningful ways among people sharing an ethnic identity, probably in ways that scholars could call statistically

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[6] A kind of traditional Mennonite cabbage soup.

significant (Barth 1969a:29). Modeling a metaphor for ethnicity on one Appadurai (1996:33) used for culture, ethnic identity is like a landscape of persons who constitute the shifting social world in which we live. People walk in generally the same direction, at roughly the same pace, and look around, seeing most of the same things, although maybe from different angles. What they see are the ethnic icons. The motion all across the ethnic landscape reflects the notion that ethnicity is a process, like living, not a state of being. While all the people move across the landscape together, a few features are sometimes, or maybe always, obscured for some, and some people have a bit of a better perspective on some of what is there. Nevertheless, people understand the significance and potential of most of what they see and do on their shared ethnic landscape in more or less the same way (Appadurai 1996:33).

Barth (1969b:118-120) illustrates the same point with the Pathan example I mentioned before. Pathan cultural patterns exhibited broad variation, including mixed farming in the hills, owning estates in the fertile valleys and overseeing the indentured labourers who cultivated them, nomadic pastoralism, travelling as merchants to other regions, and working in towns. Most of those people communicated only indirectly with most other Pathans. Barth (1969b:116) reports that they nevertheless considered themselves somehow ethnically connected. Iconic of those connections, representative of them for many people, were the discernible characteristics which Barth (1969b:119-122) identified as patrilineal descent from a common ancestor, the Islamic religion, and several Pathan customs such as their language, male egality, and value placed on self-expression, self-assertion, honour in public affairs, domestic privacy, and a characteristic pattern of hospitality. People sharing an ethnic identity might ignore, play down, or outright deny radical cultural differences among themselves if those are not important to their situation or ambitions (Barth 1969a:29). I do not have sufficient data to show that it is possible to make an analogy between ethnic Mennonites in a few locations in the world and the disparate Pathans Barth descibed, but I wonder if some meaningful commonalities could be found among culturally very different Mennonites in

Mexico, Paraguay, the Ukraine, and Canada, for example. I will suggest later in the paper that some culturally different Mennonites in different places in the world do believe themselves to have an ethnic bond.

Shared culture need not imply ethnic association. Carol Eastman (1984:260), talking about language, suggests that valuing some aspect of a culture is not in itself a sign of ethnic affiliation. Maybe a little cultural understanding, or simply learning to value some custom or idea associated with an ethnic other, could make one sympathetic somehow to a cause or tradition of theirs, but that does not need to imply the adoption of an ethnic identity. This concerns simple things such as eating Chinese food, or listening to Bob Marley records, which people all over the world do, but which have different meanings for some people than for others. More importantly, though, this relates to matters of cultural diffusion, which have been especially rapid and widespread all over the world during the last thirty or forty years (Hannerz 1987). For example, the popularity of American pop music in the Philippines does not likely mean that the karaoke aficionados there believe themselves to be American, although the songs might have a nominally Americanizing cultural influence on them (Appadurai 1996:29). Similarly, the culture of American factory workers manufacturing goods in a just-in-time production system has been Japanized a little (Greider 1997:108), but I do not believe those American factory workers feel at all Japanese because of their work. Also, individuals who have discarded an ethnic identity might still value some of the cultural ideas and practices that are commonly associated with it, but might attribute a different meaning to them.

I will describe the relationship of language, religion, and history, three common examples of ethnic icons which are pertinent to a study of Mennonites, at a little more length. Judging by my reading of the literature on ethnicity, it seems that institutions much less commonly possess iconic value in people's construction of their ethnic identities, but they do for many Mennonites, and I will discuss that notion a little, as well.

Language

Language acts as one of the most comprehensive, flexible, and powerful symbols of ethnic identity. The language we speak becomes an almost comprehensive reflection of our lives and our worldviews. Whatever we value about our ethnic identities will likely characterize the language we speak as well, making it an encompassing, and compelling symbol of ethnicity in nearly every situation. Speaking a distinctive language, at least in ethnically meaningful situations, can therefore make it an emotionally powerful ethnic icon (Fishman 1989:32). An example of this is Ted Klassen and George Peters' self-published novella *Kohmt met noh Expho*,[7] a book whose theme of taking a road trip to Vancouver is not apparently Mennonite, but which clearly becomes Mennonite literature when one realizes it is written in Plautdietsch, a Mennonite language.

Although some languages can be mutually intelligible (Fishman 1989:35), in situations when contextually constructed ethnic boundaries are quite indistinct, ethnic others can create symbolic hard boundaries between themselves if they are able to speak unintelligible languages (Fishman 1989:32). Elevating the political significance of language, as has been done in Québec, for example (Vaillantcourt 1992:186), and as Anderson (1983:25) emphasizes was key to the formation of national identities all over the world, can emphasize ethnic difference from others, reinforcing the sense of dichotomy (Fishman 1989:27, 32). Similarly, until the middle of the twentieth century, Mennonites in Canada did not speak the common language of the state in which they lived amongst themselves, so their separation from the state, and from their non-Mennonite neighbours, could seem unquestionable, even if they were not so absolutely socially removed (Neufeld 1989:209). In those days, language could be used to form a hard boundary between who was Mennonite and who was not.

Many ethnic groups do not speak a distinctive language, or maybe once did, but stopped somehow along the way. Those groups simply dispense with language as a crucial symbol of their ethnicity (Fishman 1989:32). In Canada, many people do not speak their ancestral language, or anyway, not so well that

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[7] Let's Go to Expo ['86], or Come to Expo with Me.

they could assert themselves using it, so language is actually an unimportant ethnic symbol for many Canadians (Kirtz 1996:10). Eastman (1984:265) suggests that an identifiable accent or a little distinctive vocabulary might function as an effective ethnic icon. Similarly, particular words, or even larger portions of a language, if some individuals are still competent with so much of a traditional language, might be brought out by people on special occasions to celebrate their ethnicity (Eastman 1984:265).

Religion

Religion can be another important ethnic icon (Partos 1997:90; Van Dijk 1998:24; Marty 1997:10), and it certainly is for Mennonites (Redekop, J. 1987:19). Gellner (1983:71) argues that a religion is less likely to be discarded than a language, and that it might be the aspect of culture least likely to change over time, which might make it an icon that could especially well lend ethnicity a sense of timelessness. Something else that can make religion a compelling ethnic icon is its flexibly comprehensive presence in the lives of religious people. According to Geertz (1973:89-90), religious ethos is both a model of reality and a model for reality. It is a representation of a way of life that would be ideally adapted to the actual state of affairs which people's worldview portrays, and worldview presents an image of an actual state of nature to which their religious ethos would be particularly well-suited. This congruence of religious ethos and worldview makes people's way of life seem like common sense to them, since their observations of the world around them and their way of living borrow authority from their ideas about divinity, and their ideas about divinity in turn draw authority from their ability to explain the world around the believers. Nothing is perfect, of course, so conflicts and contradictions enter into the picture, but religion can be a comprehensive, emotionally charged ethnic icon, because it can reinforce the apparent appropriateness of the cultural and social status quo. Like one's language, which is certainly vital in more ways than just as an ethnic rallying point, religious faith means far more to religious people than merely being a symbol that helps order their social loyalties. My point is that religion can also contribute to the ordering of social loyalties.

Religious identity and ethnic identity might be difficult to discern in certain situations for some people. The word Mennonite can represent either ethnic or religious identity, or both simultaneously, for different people (Redekop, J. 1987:16, 57; Sawatsky 1991:115). Certainly the two have a considerable influence on one another for nearly all Mennonites (Redekop, J. 1987:57). Some of the obvious parallels I see between religious and ethnic identity are that both support processes of social interaction, both tie life somehow to eternity, and both can provide people's lives with meaning, moral structure, coherence, direction, unity, and even sometimes easement, among some other things (Klass 1995:38; Barth 1969a:10, 14; Fishman 1989:25; Appadurai 1996:157).[8]

Of course substantial differences distinguish ethnicity and religion, as well. My paper about Mennonites would be easier to write if that were either not true, or else very obviously true. Maybe it would be easier to read then, too. Primary among what differentiates the two is that divinity is not generally attributed to ethnic social bonds, whereas religion is preoccupied with divinity (Geertz 19773:102). Ethnicity is formed primarily through social loyalties (Barth 1969a:10), while religious identity is based considerably in some characteristic understanding of, and interaction with, the universe, however it is thought to be constituted or populated (Klass 1995:25). No religion is necessary at all for ethnic identity to exist (Marty 1997:5). On the other hand, people with a single ethnic identity might be religiously diverse (Matthiasson, 1983:339), and religions frequently cross ethnic boundaries (Madan 1997:64).

History

Appadurai (1996:42) suggests that for culturally similar, ethnically separate people whose ancestors were culturally different from one another, heritage becomes the most common basis for establishing ethnic solidarity and

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[8] I think the religious notion of eternity must be common knowledge, but ethnicity certainly seems timeless, as well (Appadurai 1996:41, 157). An example of the apparent timelessness of ethnicity might be the inclusion of bronze age people and the exploits of Charlemagne in German history (Maehl 1979:5, 29), as if those people, living at a time before Germanness had been organized on German terms (Anderson 1983:16), had thought they were Germans. Similarly, Appadurai (1996:157) suggests that dreams of the future are vital to people's ethnic identities now.

difference. That must be true in English Canada, where we are culturally similar to one another, but in many cases, our ancestors were not (Peter 1981:57; Kymlicka 1998:23). Heritage is a flexible concept, though, and ethnicity's continuing relevance among Canadians is likely to be supported by people's changing conceptions of their heritages.

Interpretations of historic events can change in support of practical needs. As part of such an effort, some aspects of heritage might be emphasized, and others reconceived. Meanings and events from history which cannot be incorporated constructively into present value systems might simply be omitted from historic accounts altogether (Alonso 1988:45). Discussing that theme as it relates to minority groups in the Mexican state, Ana Maria Alonso (1988:40) argues that ideas about the meanings of particular historic events are commonly central to the creation of symbolic constitutions and social solidarity for the people whose identity is connected to those events. Social projects in the present can help define ideologies of history (Alonso 1988:42), and inversely, narrative accounts thought of as group history can help legitimate people's identity and social activities in the present (Alonso 1988:40). Eric Hobsbawm (1983:2)[9] has pointed out that the sanction of the weight of time can lend legitimacy to a cultural innovation. To put that another way, when people form their present, they construct with it a past from which it seems to flow naturally, and in the terms of which the present is readily explicable (Toren 1988:696). It is not reasonable to suppose that a new version of group heritage will be superior to old ones; rather, new versions are written to suit some other cultural context, and some other social purpose, than the old ones were (Hobsbawm 1983:5-6). There are numerous examples in the anthropological literature of this kind of productive historical revision (Amirkhanov 1998; Alonso 1988; Olwig 1999; Castillo and Nigh 1998), and Royden Loewen (1993a) has discussed it in the context of Manitoba Mennonites.

Institutions

[9] Hobsbawm is talking about tradition, not history, although the two are surely closely connected in the notion of heritage. Certainly it is reasonable to categorize new ways of understanding history as cultural innovations.

Raymond Breton (1964:194), who was interested in the relationship between ethnic communities and institutions, observed that some ethnic communities were formed mostly through networks of interpersonal relationships, whereas others involved much more formal organization. Some of the sorts of institutions that might support ethnic solidarity are religious, educational, political, recreational, national, and professional ones. People might set up their own schools, shrines, mutual aid societies, or organize their own communications media (Breton 1964:194). Institutions can serve people in two ways. They can function as ethnic locations, where people can meet in relative social exclusivity to engage in whatever they might want to do without having to explain it to a broader audience, or modify it to make it culturally accessible to ethnic outsiders. Thus, while Canadian school curricula are generally acceptable to Mennonites (Sawatsky 1994:105; Neufeld 1989:186), they keep their own schools anyway, because there are some things that many Mennonites want to include in the educations of their children that are additional to the standard Canadian curricula (WMES 1997:4; Neufeld 1989:186). Also, as I have already pointed out, institutional activities, and people's limited, but understood, role in them, can contribute to the perpetuation of imagined communities. I will discuss a few Mennonite institutions later.[10] The Mennonite Community Orchestra can provide a quick example now of an interesting way that a Mennonite institution plays a part in Mennonite community. First of all, the orchestra is sponsored in part by some Mennonite businesses (Klassen, B. 1993:56), so its existence says something to other Mennonites about Mennonite businesspeople. Also, the orchestra sometimes debuts original works by Mennonite composers (Klassen, B. 1993:101), so anyone in the audience learns both that there are Mennonite composers, and what sort of music they make. Since the institutions represent Mennoniteness in some way on Mennonite terms, there very existance takes on a representative meaning in relation to people's Mennoniteness.

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[10] There are many interesting examples to be found in Calvin Redekop's (1996:128-132) list of forty-seven Mennonite institutions, and what they do.

Joanne Van Dijk (1998) describes a good example of a role institutions can play in some people's ethnic identities. She studied Roman Catholics and Calvinists who migrated from the Netherlands to Canada after World War Two, and found that Catholics, out of convenience, joined existing Catholic institutions in Canada, and eventually came to blend in quite entirely with the populations there. Dutch Calvinists, meanwhile, because their religious convictions matched no one else's, founded and have maintained their own institutions. Van Dijk (1998:32, 36) reports that Calvinists have remained more socially exclusive, and more culturally Dutch than Catholics. Religious institutions became a focus of ethnic identity for the Calvinists, who maintained an identity stronger and more distinct than that of the Catholics, who adopted no Canadian focus for their Dutch identities. Cooperating in an organization can be a satisfying way to express one's identity socially, just as speaking an iconic language is a good way to share identity meaningfully with someone (Rempel, H. 1996:6). Participating in ethnic institutions is also one of the ways people can publicly affirm, within valued social frameworks, their sense of who they are.

Motivation, or **Cause**

Ethnic associations need to be socially effective for the people who participate in them (Barth 1969a:13). Ethnicity is always in some way goal-oriented. Ethnicity is not effective in the way a national constitution or a motivational speech is, and ethnic identity does not make one goal-oriented in the same way joining Greenpeace or the Liberal Party of Canada does. A better sense of the usefulness of ethnicity comes from Marx's old adage that people do not just live within their circumstances, but collectively and individually play a part in forming them (Jenkins 1992:70). While our ethnic associations influence our senses of self and our worldviews, they are simultaneously one of the channels through which we go about forming the sort of society in which we want to be living. There is no requisite level of enthusiasm for ethnic goals that is demanded of anyone before they can be 'in,' but group activities are generally oriented by some sense of purpose, just the same.

The purposes of an ethnic identity's existence might conceivably include almost anything, but a few goals are common these days. People's dignity and their collective freedom for political and cultural self-determination might depend to a certain extent on the group's being recognized by others (Appadurai 1996:15). Appadurai (1996:147) suggests the collective support of individuals' dignity might be especially important to persecuted minorities, but dignity is an important aspect of everyone's life, and ethnicity must play a role in that for everyone. Certainly Mennonites in Winnipeg are not a persecuted minority, but Al Dueck (1988:221) observes that individual dignity for some of them is maintained partly through the social support which members find in their churches. The inverse of this issue is also interesting. A couple of the people I spoke with last summer made suggestions similar to what I found in the literature on Mennonites. They said the legalism of some Mennonite religious ideas and the relatively intolerant social attitudes of some community members seem sometimes to erode Mennonite dignity from within a little (Vogt 1988:308; Dueck, A. 1988:220; Braul 1997:7).

Collectively becoming established, or maintaining a position, as recognized players on the economic or cultural map can also be important. That seems to be what is happening now in Québec, where sovereignists want to establish Québec as an autonomous member of the global community of nations, and thereby free themselves from the limitations of being able to speak in that arena only through the filter formed by the rest of Canada (Watson 1996:39). Maybe this goal is also held in Malaysia, where the government has formalized a national plan aimed at becoming a respected economic force in the global order by the year 2020 (Greider 1997:85). I guess Mennonites have been doing this sort of collective image management, too, but instead of using economic prowess or political self-assertion, they have been doing it mostly through voluntary service in support of causes that they value (Regehr 1996:61; Enns, Anna 1996b:7). I will discuss that further later in the paper.

Appadurai (1996:147) lists some other reasons people might feel ethnically united. One of those is the circular argument that ethnicity might be a value unto itself, existing merely in order to provide identity (Appadurai

1996:14). Others include protecting land, or other economic resources, or engaging reliably and productively in a mutualist relationship with some ethnic others. An ethnic identity that includes a territorial claim might seem like a nationalist ideology, as I will define that later, but Knutsson (1969:99) argues that that need not be the case. He demonstrates that the Arsi goal in protecting the land to which their identity was tied was to insure they would continue to have access to its productive potential. Others were allowed free access to economic niches in that territory that were not important to the Arsi, and the people sharing that valued territory did not make demands on one another regarding cultural or identity conformity. Some other possible ethic goals Appadurai (1996:147) suggests are protecting important religious beliefs, maintaining a cultural arena for self-expression, or protecting and propagating esteemed traditional cultural patterns. An aspect of ethnic identity that might become a collective goal is the idea that others should rightfully be dominated, as Nazi Germany as well as most any colonial empire wanted. As Mennonites have tried to do sometimes, not changing at all might reasonably also be a collective goal (Urry 1989:40; Neufeld 1989:14-15), but I wonder if even trying to stay the same would require a certain amount change in an altering environment. Matthiasson (1983:340) reports that one of the ethnic goals of Icelandic Canadians in Manitoba has been to be good Canadians, and to be good Icelandics, too. Effective cultural integration with others must also be a reasonable ethnic goal. Conceivably, of course, there could be persons who value their ethnic identities because they know no other way to live.

If particular conceptions of ethnicity exist for reasons, then it seems to follow that they would cease to exist if their agendas were achieved. Kraybill (1988:159) suggests that could be true, but cites no examples of it having happened. Soviet ethnic identity, which existed once (Fishman 1989:39), seems to have dissolved for many people starting around 1991 (MacKenzie and Curran 1993:854). The fact is that ethnic identity does not often involve the sort of very narrow or objective goals that could likely ever be reached. Many ethnic agendas, such as maintaining dignity or protecting some amount of cultural autonomy, are presumably unending goals, and therefore are not

absolutely achieved even while they are being adequately fulfilled. Other goals, such as being thought of as economically successful, are relative, and only ever measurable in relation to the economic state of contemporaries. It is common to adjust the standards or criteria by which circumstances are judged according to the continually changing broader cultural context in which people live (Barth 1969:10, 13). All in all, it is not unreasonable to conclude that any particular ethnic group could persist indefinitely. Barth (1969a:33) makes it quite clear that people can collectively change their orientation without changing their ethnic identity. I will suggest later in the paper that Mennonites' ethnic goals have changed without having created the pervading conviction among them that they are no longer Mennonites.

Multiple Identities

Individuals are able to maintain and constructively express multiple ethnic identities. I mentioned earlier that people sharing an ethnic identity have different relationships both to one another and to ethnic cultural icons (Nagata 1974:333; Appadurai 1996:44). In fact, the same cultural objects or activities can be used as icons for different ethnic identities (Nagata 1974:333), and might therefore best be examined in the context of particular events (Moore 1994:365). The result of this social and cultural fluidity, as Barth (1969b:132) has argued, and as Nagata (1974:333) has demonstrated more clearly, is that people are not fixed to single ethnic identities, and that they can shift contextually, when that is strategically beneficial, or socially comfortable (Nagata 1974:340), and culturally and personally possible (Barth 1969a:22; 1969b:132). Not only might people conceive of particular ethnic identities in ways a little different from one another's, but it is quite reasonable as well that people who share a particular identity in some social contexts would feel ethnic difference from one another in other situations (Nagata 1974:333). Some people might share only some of the basis for feeling a bond with others, and might feel that identity only in some situations. Their ethnic bond in those situations need not seem any less real or strong than anyone else's (Appadurai 1996:39). Also, multiple identities might reasonably be learned at any time in

one's life, whether as a child or an adult. Nagata's (1974:335-336, 344-345) example is of Malay identity in poly-ethnic Malaysia. She explains in considerable detail how some people in Malaysia in the early 1970s could ascribe one identity, maybe Arab, or Kling, or Javanese, to themselves in some situations, yet feel and be counted as Malay in others. Inclusion as a Malay had a lot to do with being Muslim and with certain cultural marks of being Malay. Still, Chinese Muslims were not generally included as Malays, and some Arabs who were Malay in some contexts conscientiously avoided some of the Malay ethnic icons, because those might compromise their Arab identities in other situations. Similarly, I will try to show later that Mennonites in Winnipeg are sometimes ethnically different from other Winnipeggers, and Canadians, and at other times ethnically the same. They have a similar variable relationship with other Mennonites in other places.

People's multiple identities do not likely fit into any sort of branching taxonomies where each successive identity group includes a greater number of relatively less similar people. Since ethnic identity is formed through social activity, and felt and represented through meaningful cultural markers, pluralities of individuals' multiple ethnic identities likely as not overlap and interweave in complex and disjointed ways (Appadurai 1996:14). Ethnic identity is a social construction, and therefore not necessarily territorially bounded. People whose identity includes some broad, transnational connections likely also have local identities. People with the same local identities might well have different transnational identities, though, and vice versa (Appadurai 1996:139). For example, Maira (1999:32) describes bhangra dance parties in New York as socially exclusive places where second generation Indian Americans develop part of their ethnic identities. Most of the people at the parties are the children of Indians and Pakistanis who migrated to the United States in the 1970s, and the music and dance is a blending of Punjabi folk music and hip hop. The parties are therefore simultaneously expressions of Indian identities that tie the young people ethnically to Indians elsewhere, significantly in South Asia, and American identity that provides them with a sense of belonging where they are, and also Indian American identity

which is in some ways distinct from, and the same as, both. One of Maira's (1999:29) main points, though, is that this is only one of the ways that Indian and American identities can be constructed. I do not believe the American identities of American Mennonites, for example, have anything to do with bhangra dancing, but they are tied to the American identities of young Indians anyway.

Here is a version of a metaphor David Bai (pers. com. 1999) suggested to me that might help clarify how ethnic identity can be so compelling for people, and simultaneously so difficult to assign to them absolutely. Ethnic groups can be a little like constellations on a very starry night. The stars do seem to form shapes and figures, although those really only exist in the mind of the stargazer, and anyone willing to crane their neck could reasonably suppose the stars to be organized into constellations in some other way. Furthermore, some constellations leave out some of the stars they could include, considering their spatial distribution, and constellations sometimes seem to include stars that might not, in some people's minds, obviously fit. Some stars are integral to more than one constellation. Sometimes some stars seem to be in a constellation, and at other times, maybe they are not. Ethnicity is a little like that.

Continuity in Membership

Barth (1969a:10) points out that the common supposition that ethnic groups are "largely biologically self-perpetuating" is erroneous. Consistent with Barth, Joshua Fishman (1989:39) makes examples of ethnic identities, such as American and Soviet, that clearly do not include the demand that one have the right blood, and the same is clearly true of Canada. Nagata (1974:344) makes a similar argument regarding some ethnic Malays who have no Malay ancestors. Since ethnicity is not a responsibility in itself, people are not obliged to perpetuate the ethnicities of their ancestors.[11] The circumstance remains, though, that we tend to adopt the ethnic identities of our parents, and fit ourselves into those ethnic social networks. Further, and although they might

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[11] Social relationships involve certain responsibilities, and ethnicity is a kind of social relationship, so it involves responsibility in that sense.

change its form or expression, our descendants are likely to have ethnic identities much like our own.

I will try to take a good guess at part of the reason we do tend to adopt our parents' ethnic identity. Familial relationships and friendships we form growing up often go a fair way toward establishing lasting in-group social bonds, starting basically when we are born. Our senses of self are formed mostly from the significant social relationships we keep, so that we become, to a great extent, who we learn from others to be, and we generally change in response to significant other people (Kasdorf 1997:176). For all of our lives, we have more and closer relationships with people with whom we share values and experiences, or with whom we cooperate regularly and personally, than we are likely to have with anyone with whom we have little in common. Ethnicity can imply a commonality of that kind, and so is perpetuated because it is part of the social context in which our sense of self is formed, and in which some of our significant social relationships exist. Appadurai (1996:14, 111), on a similar note, suggests that ethnic identity, like other kinds of social relationship, exists, to a great extent, due to enjoyment that we have shared with others on ethnic terms. Being able to feel good because one possesses a particular ethnic identity reinforces the value one gives that identity in their life. It is likely that others with our ethnic identity could become our friends, based initially maybe only on a kind of feeling of familiarity that shared ethnic identity can give us (Fishman 1989:25). Paul Toews (1986:25) describes meetings of Mennonites living in American cities like San Francisco and New York, where they are really only few, as "filled with fraternity, friendship, emotional camaraderie, and levels of significance even when they occur only several times a year." Social bonds with that sort of significance seem likely to be influential in our development of a sense of self, including an ethnic part of ourselves. Maybe that is why most people keep the ethnic identities they learn from their parents.

Habitus

Habitus is an aspect of culture that I think has a lot to do with social comfort of the sort I was just talking about. As is true of anything cultural,

habitus is not necessarily coincident with ethnicity, but it can be importantly tied to it, and habitus can be a part of what helps us recognize people with whom we have something in common. Pierre Bourdieu (1990:53), whose hermeneutic invention it is, defined habitus as the set of durable, transposable dispositions useful for going about the mundane stuff of living. Habitus is a culturally learned way of moving, staying still, positioning ourselves in physical relation to others, and generally carrying on the common little activities of everyday life (Bourdieu 1990:53, 58). Habitus is our culture as it is expressed in our muscles and joints. It is likely to be distributed among a population as unevenly and variously as any aspect of culture, change just as anything cultural does, but maybe more slowly (Appadurai 1996:6), and likely matches the cultural roles we are accustomed to playing. Associating with people who have a familiar habitus can be part of a comfortable social life. If one recognizes something familiar in the habitus of others with whom one shares an ethnic identity, that might make those ethnic social bonds particularly satisfying or attractive.

Habitus exists in and through the actions of individuals and their interaction with each other and the rest of their environment. It develops through experience more than teaching, and becomes part of our subconscious. For anyone who can recognize the cultural connotation of a particular physical manner, a particular habitus can suggest something about one's life, maybe that they are a man or a woman, an eldest son, a Christian, or an heir (Bourdieu 1990:58). We express our habitus in the way we talk, maybe quietly and sparsely, or using characteristic words, the way we move, whether carefully or confidently, for example, or the way we make particular things, such as bread, or for instance, the way flowers might typically be planted in gardens. One's habitus does not determine one's actions, and it is not consciously aimed at any ends. A recognizable habitus can thereby make ethnicity portable and identifiable to insightful strangers, because one practices their habitus everywhere they go, maybe all of the time.

We acquire our habitus from the people in our immediate social environment, and pass it on among the same, so it generally becomes proximally shared among an interactive community (Bourdieu 1990:54), which

generally means families first of all. Our relationships are more significant, and our interactions more constant with them than with anyone else in our lives. Interactive community must mean the Mennonites living in rural villages in Russia or Canada, too, but it might also include church groups in Winnipeg, where interactions have a significance different from those with co-workers or classmates (Dyck, G. 1997:6; Redekop, J. 1987:82; Harder, M. 1998:6-7).

I do not know if aspects of habitus sometimes become iconic, but one's habitus is almost always evident, and so can be an important cultural expression of ethnicity. I found a loose collection of references that suggest some qualities of Mennonite habitus. Patrick Friesen (a poet with license, I realize) once wrote (1988:102) that he could pick a Mennonite out of a crowd in New York City just by the way they walked. Another glimpse at a Mennonite habitus comes from the first impression of Frederick Ross (1988:170), who did not grow up as a Mennonite. He recalls Mennonite high school students in Steinbach long ago in the 1960s were "quiet, subdued, and almost boring." A character in a Sandra Birdsell (1982:129) novel declares: "I despised their fervent good works and their complete lack of adornment. It made them seem unnatural and grimly severe. They seldom smiled."[12] Another familiar aspect of modern Mennonite habitus is a way of conducting and engaging in church services. Harold Funk (1999:357) says Mennonite church architecture reflects Mennonite notions of the equality of all church members, and Marge Friesen (1997:7) and Katherine Funk (1997:7) say that Mennonites are mostly quiet, passive, and thoughtful during church services. A familiarly Mennonite manner of singing seems to exist (Thiessen, Jen 1997a:9; Kasdorf 1997:183) although there is not really any original Mennonite repertoire (Berg 1988:92; Brandt, C. 1992:20). The character of Mennonite singing might be changing now, to the discomfort of some, and pleasure of others. It is becoming less like high church music, and more like modern pop music (Loewen, M. 1997c:6; Doerksen, Victor 1997:6; Enns, E. 1997:7).

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[12] That was the only record I found of someone responding negatively to the ceaseless Mennonite impulsion to do good works. Volunteering and the Mennonite service ethic are themes that will come up again.

The interesting aspect of habitus for the purposes of this paper is related to what Patrick Friesen was joking about, and Paul Toews (1986:25), who commented about rare but warm Mennonite get-togethers in New York and San Francisco, was serious about. Differences in habitus can make ordinary interactions feel almost awkward in a strange social environment, and can make familiar social environments especially comfortable and welcoming. Being with people who share many elements of one's own habitus can make nearly any place, and nearly any activity, feel a little like home, for better or worse. That might be a reason people favour ethnic social bonds.

The Adoption of New Ethnic Identities

Individuals can adopt new ethnic identities in their lifetimes if they possess the cultural means to do so, and if some social incentive gives them some advantage if they change (Barth 1969a:22; Nagata 1974:340). Barth (1969a:22) suggests that entire households or communities might shift affiliations more readily together than individuals can, and Eastman (1984:267) suggests the opposite. Either way, the process is slow and difficult, and is only likely to happen for some compelling, if maybe unarticulated, reason. For example, some visiting labourers from Thailand and Ghana settle down in Israel, teach their children Hebrew, sometimes marry Jewish Israelis, and want to convert to Judaism, because they like it there and feel like Jews (Halkin 1998:54). Halkin (1998:54) describes some of the controversy surrounding questions of whether such people are Jews are not, and what effect it will have on Israeli and Palestinian politics if they convert and are granted citizenship. People who adopt new ethnic identities during their lives can come to identify quite as completely with those as the people who are participating in ethnic networks continuous with the ones their ancestors maintained (Barth 1969a:24), but to do so, they have to change substantially their beliefs about who they are in society. Maybe the character of an ethnic identity is more likely to change than people's social affiliations (Eastman 1984:267), but remember that Nagata (1974:333) has demonstrated that people can adopt a new ethnic identity without discarding previous ones.

The topic of switching or adopting new ethnic identities is very relevant to my paper, because some Mennonites are fairly eager to make religious converts (Neufeld 1989:83-154; Sawatsky 1991:113). It would be a mistake to confuse religious conversion with the adoption of ethnic identity, though. One need not be an ethnic Mennonite to value the Mennonite religion (Redekop 1987:16), but I will try to demonstrate later in this paper that becoming a religious Mennonite is in some ways a different, maybe less encumbered, process than becoming an ethnic one. One of the reasons Mennonite congregations try to attract new members is that they believe Jesus' religious movement was expansionist, and that to be good Christians, Mennonites should try to gain converts, too (Sawatsky 1991:113; Neufeld 1989:83; Baergen 1997:6). Only one of the church ministers I spoke with about this indicated that non-Mennonites would not be especially welcome in their congregation. The reason for that was that ethnic non-Mennonites wouldn't likely fit in well there. Unlike the religion, I know nothing about Mennonite ethnicity which suggests that something would be gained if there were more ethnic Mennonites in the world.

The rest of the essay will follow the tenets I have set out here fairly closely. There is no need for anyone to prove who they are, since identity is based in ascription, and for the same reason, there is nothing anyone can do that will demonstrate beyond a doubt who they are. Ethnic icons have value as expressions of identity, and they are cultural rallying points for people to centre their shared ethnic identities around. In application, then, being Mennonite does not give anyone the responsibility to participate in Mennonite cultural activities, such as speaking German, or to join institutions, such as the Mennonite Central Committee. For people who are Mennonite, though, doing those things can be a good way to go about being Mennonite. Ethnicity is, after all, a social activity, and is best expressed and reinforced through social activity. People do not need to be familiar with one another to share an ethnic identity, and in fact they can be quite different, but feel compelling solidarity nevertheless, as long as they ascribe meaning to their shared social bonds.

People are likely to adopt the ethnic identities of their role models in early life, but we continue to participate in and value ethnic social networks because it has worth for us, as individuals with that ethnic identity, to do so. Since people value their ethnic identities because those have worth to them, and because the people of the world nearly universally value ethnicity today, it seems only reasonable to complete the circle by concluding that ethnicity is for the most part something good.

Some Cultural History of Manitoba Mennonites

Early Mennonite History

Modern Mennonite ethnic identity proceeds partly from an accumulation of historic experiences. Here is a brief account of the trail that Mennonites have taken to Winnipeg, and to the way they conceive of themselves there now. That Mennonites became a kind of people is one of the indirect results of the Anabaptist movement in Germanic Northwestern Europe in the mid-sixteenth century. I will point out that the Anabaptist movement was both a religious movement (Weaver 1990:29), and a social movement (Loewen, H. 1980:90), but I will not take the time to discuss it here.[1] The local church and government authorities violently opposed the Anabaptists in those early days (Loewen, H. 1980:91). While some of the radicals found compromises that allowed them to co-exist with their Catholic and Protestant neighbours (Voolstra 1991:277), others fled, starting around 1550, and gathered in the area of the Vistula River Delta, near the Hanseatic city of Danzig, where they settled into a new life territorially removed from their persecutors (Myovich 1996:218).

Mennonites from many regions, significantly including Flanders, Frisian, and the German Palatinate, joined together there, and their language and culture became considerably Prussianized over the years (Urry 1989:45; Friesen, V. 1988:18). By the end of the eighteenth century, a land shortage in Mennonite farming villages around Danzig and political problems related to Frederick II's constitutional monarchy motivated many Mennonites to look for new opportunities elsewhere (Urry 1989:47). As has been the case each time Mennonites have ever migrated, some people found it less onerous to adapt to troubling changes at home than to move to some unknown place, and stayed where they were (Urry 1989:155).

The ethnic identities of the waves of Mennonite migrants who later arrived in Canada were substantially formed during the time Mennonites lived in Russia (Rempel, D. 1974a:50; Urry 1989:103). Some Mennonites reached

an agreement, in 1787, to take possession of two blocks of land, and to establish farms in the then expanding Russian state. Russia was making very similar bargains with migrants from other areas around the same time in attempt to assert political control in new areas of South Russia recently won from the Ottomans, and to launch a program of economic development there (Rempel, D. 1974a:6). Urry (1989:22) summarizes cultural change over the next hundred years by observing that "by 1889, Mennonites were actively involved in many aspects of life beyond their communities, and the clear distinctions which had once separated Mennonites from external influences were ... either blurred or considered irrelevant." The Russianization of Mennonite culture did not make Mennonites less conscious of their Mennoniteness and ethnic difference from Russians, though (Urry 1989:264). Mennonites' changing popular conception of their identity during the nineteenth century had much to do with villagers' growing awareness of what was going on in the rest of the Mennonite colonies, and of what the Mennonite relationship to non-Mennonites was like. For the most part, Mennonites gained their awareness of the broader world through travel, trade, and education (Urry 1989:149, 237, 105, 272).

Mennonites In Canada

The first Mennonites arrived in Manitoba from Russia in 1874, and settled in two large blocks of land which they inhabited exclusively (Ens, Adolf 1994a:41). Most of those roughly 7500 people migrated either because they were landless in Russia, and looking for farms of their own, or because they were made uncomfortable both by Russia's new nationalist policies, and by the increasing cultural liberalism and educational ambitions of many Russian Mennonites themselves (Urry 1989:215). They hoped to solve both those problems at once by establishing farms on the Canadian Prairie, and the Canadian government invited them because it hoped Mennonite immigrants might make more intensive use of the land than the Six Nations and Métis people farming and hunting there at the time were (Good 1994:xi, xiv). In

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[1] For what it might be worth, what I know about the Anabaptist movement suggests to me that it fits the pattern Anthony Wallace (1956) described in his theoretical writing about revitalization movements.

addition to giving them free land, the Canadian government promised the Mennonites they would not have to participate in the military, they would have religious freedom, they could educate their own children in their own schools,[2] and that they would not have to swear oaths, which is something Mennonites opposed on moral grounds. The government also lent them, collectively, $100 000 to help them start their farms (Ens, Adolf 1994a:17).

Things went well enough for the Mennonites in Manitoba for about forty years, and then some major changes came about. Beginning in the 1910s, conservative Mennonites launched and lost a battle with the provincial government over matters of local autonomy, including issues related to municipal government, Mennonite control over their own children's schooling, and allegiance to the state. In response, about 3250 conservative Mennonites, from a population of over 21 000, left Manitoba between 1923 and 1926, and went to Mexico (Epp, F. 1982:605; Sawatzky 1971:65), and 1160 more moved to Paraguay between 1926 and 1930 (Francis 1955:192). Francis (1955:81) argues that the conflict arose because the Mennonites coming to Canada in search of freedom, and the government of Canada that was offering it to them, disagreed on exactly what the word freedom meant. For Mennonites, it generally meant freedom from government interference in Mennonite communal affairs, but for the government it meant the freedom of individuals to participate in a society where social controls were applied to all, as equally as possible, by the state. The conflicts arose when Mennonites and the government of Manitoba argued about whose definition of freedom would prevail.

At the very same time that those were leaving, about 6800 of the Mennonites who had fled the newly formed Soviet Union settled in Manitoba, in many cases just taking the places of the departing Mennonites (Neufeld 1989:39). Many of the Mennonites arriving from the Soviet Union had been the sorts of cultural liberals who had Russianized, and who had sponsored various

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[2] The matter of educational freedom was complicated by some misunderstandings about who had authority to be granting that freedom, and about the interpretation of some bureaucratic language (Ens, Adolf 1994a:17). I will not go far into the conflict about the Manitoba Schools act, but its root lies, in part, in the agreement the Mennonites believed they had made when they first arrived.

Mennonite educational facilities, social institutions, and industrial endeavors in Russia (Rempel, D. 1974a:41-43; Urry 1989:233). They took a generally similar attitude to life in Canada. Unlike many of the Mennonites who had arrived in the 1870s, the ambitions of the 1923 migrants were not restricted to farming or to living in isolation. They wanted to be economically successful, and to have culturally diverse and rich lives (Ens, Anna 1996:14).

Urbanization

Some Mennonite leaders feared that urbanization would be the end of the Mennonites (Lohrenz 1974:3). Ted Regehr (1996:1) cites an unpublished report by Winfield Fretz,[3] an American Mennonite sociologist, who wrote in 1943 that "Where Mennonites have gone to the cities, the solidarity of the communities has been shattered ... Mennonites moving to the cities have in large numbers lost their identities as Mennonites." The next section will tell a little about how Mennonites arrived in the city, and the rest of the essay will show how Fretz's prediction was, to a great extent, mistaken.

The first Mennonites moved to Winnipeg before 1907 (Doerksen, Victor G. 1997:191), and Ernest Enns (1986:17) reports that by 1917, fifty-eight Mennonite families were living there. They began to hold monthly church services in 1921 (Enns, E. 1986:17). The first Mennonites to organize themselves more formally in the city must have been a number of young women who worked as domestic servants, beginning in 1925, in order to help pay off their families' travel debts from two years before. Their activities were centred in the Mary-Martha Home, which was a combination community centre, dormitory, and employment office (Thiessen, A. 1991[1955]:45; Regehr 1996:176). Winnipeg's First Mennonite Church was founded soon after, in 1926, by which time the majority of the Mennonites in Winnipeg were people who had just arrived in 1923 (Enns, E. 1986:17).

In 1928, when their agreement with the government to farm for five years after arriving in Canada expired, about thirty Mennonite families settled on a

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[3] Regehr (1996:438) records the location of that report by Fretz as file IX-5-1 in the MCC records at the Archives of the Mennonite Church, in Goshen, Indiana. I have not seen it.

tract of land in North Kildonan. More followed them there each year through the depression of the 1930s. They chose semi-rural Kildonan because they wanted to maintain a closed community, but still have access to wage labour in the city (Lousier *et al* 1975:7). Many of the men in those families had been tradespeople or business owners in Russia only a few years before, and did not want to be farmers (Enns, J. 1953:11). During the first few years there, in addition to men doing wage labour in the city, Kildonan Mennonites grew vegetables and berries and raised chickens, and sold eggs and produce in the city (Enns, J. 1953:11). Many set up their own businesses, such as wood shops, trucking operations, or farm implement manufacturing businesses, on the side (Lousier *et al* 1975:6; Regehr 1988:64). Kildonan and Winnipeg both grew, and the location of the original Mennonite settlement now lies almost as near to the centre of the city as to the edge.

Mennonites moved to Winnipeg for a number of reasons. In the early 1930s, 1344 Mennonites came from the Soviet Union to Canada, via Germany. Most of those settled in Winnipeg, because they were unable to buy farmland (Neufeld 1989:52). Many Mennonite World War Two refugees from the Soviet Union settled in Winnipeg and North Kildonan around 1948[4] (Lousier *et al* 1975:10). Driedger (1990:85)[5] lists the Mennonite populations of Winnipeg as 1285 in 1941, 3460 in 1951, 13 595 in 1961, 17 850 in 1971, and 19 105 in 1981. I will explain later why I guess there are more than 20 000 Mennonites in Winnipeg today. Those population figures show that the significant period of Mennonite migration from the surrounding rural areas to Winnipeg was during the 1950s and 1960s. Lohrenz (1974:2) lists rural landlessness, poverty, and career ambitions as reasons that Mennonites moved to Winnipeg. Dennis Stoesz (1985:7) adds educational ambition as a reason to move to the city. Driedger (1988a:86) suggests that in the past, returning conscientious objectors, having seen the world and opportunity, felt unsatisfied with small town life and often chose to settle in the city. He adds that the same probably

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[4] Francis (1955:242) says 2275 refugees arrived in Manitoba then, but gives no specific figure for Winnipeg.
[5] He is citing government of Canada censi.

applies to Mennonites who have spent time away as volunteers of one sort or another.

Many early urban Mennonites in Canada, most of whom were young adults studying at the university or embarking on new careers, "devoted much time and energy to the question of how they could remain true to the tradition while also becoming constructively involved in the world," in Regehr's (1996:184) words. Many of their values and customs seemed irrelevant or impractical in the city. Regehr (1996:184) also mentions that those discussions generally took place in homes, not churches, and that the thing that tied discussants together was ethnic identity more than anything particular, such as past acquaintance or goals in some career.

Cultural Change and Ethnic Process

As circumstances in Canada have changed, and as Mennonites' relationships with other Canadians have changed, Mennonites have changed, too. There has been a Canadianization of Mennonite culture in Manitoba, and more notably in Winnipeg, since their arrival. This has had a significant effect on Mennonite ethnic identity for those Mennonites. Barth (1969a:35) says it is common for minorities to adopt majoral culture when it is useful for them to do so, and to limit their differences to aspects of life which are not important to participation in broader society. Mennonites in Winnipeg over the past few decades have adjusted their ethnic identity both to match their cultural Canadianness and to distinguish themselves from other Canadians in satisfying and useful ways.

Although ethnic identity is invariably associated with some cultural symbols, ethnicity can change independently of culture, and culture can change independently of ethnicity (Barth 1969a:38). Ethnic identity which is consistently poorly matched to people's cultural activities and social situation may well cause social distress for the people who feel such a conflict, or it might result in cultural or ethnic change (Barth 1969a:28, 30). Thus, while it is unlikely that Mennonites could become successful Canadians, on Canadian terms, if they maintained any very extreme cultural separation from others, there is no

reason that culturally Canadian Mennonites, culturally barely distinguishable from many other Canadians, could not continue to feel ethnic difference. In other words, the cultural Canadianization of Mennonites need not involve any concomitant ethnic de-Mennonitization, although it has involved a revision of some of the icons and typical expressions of Mennonite ethnic identity. Since the essence of ethnicity is ascription, not cultural distinctiveness (Barth 1969a:10), individual Mennonite Canadians can learn behaviour and attitudes from all sorts of people without it necessarily affecting their ethnic identity at all. Where potential for tension between ethnicity and culture resides is in cultural situations that demand that Mennonites engage in activities which somehow, in their own minds, lessen their own apparent Mennoniteness, or put it in doubt. This need not be limited to violations of religious values. In the past, it has surely included language (Ens, Anna 1996:118). Lohrenz (1974:2-3) worried about the questionable Mennoniteness of mothers working outside the home, open-coffin funerals, and art that was not simple, as well.

The process of ethnic change is so gradual that no one might notice it. Ethnic identity can seem fixed, or unchanging, to nearly everyone involved at any particular time. It is more often only by looking back through history that we can see how an ethnic identity has evolved, like a flowing river or a hillside whose shape changes only a little over the passing decades. Mennonites have made changes in their ethnic self-conception to go along with cultural changes over the years. While some conservatives were uncomfortable with some of the change (Lohrenz 1974:2; Regehr 1996:1), others propagated it more actively (Loewen, R. 1993a:165; McCormack 1997:111). It seems that two agents of cultural change have lead Mennonites in Manitoba to a reconception of what it is that makes them Mennonite. One consists simultaneously of the external coercion that came from official and popular nationalism in Canada, and the social advantages Mennonites could gain if they adopted some of the cultural customs and habits of other Canadians. The other agent of the Canadianization of Mennonites was economic participation, with its sometimes attractive opportunities, and sometimes inescapable demands. In many ways, the influences of the marketplace and the ambitions and restrictions of

Canadian nationalism exerted similar pressures over the years. By adjusting to one, Winnipeg Mennonites could simultaneously, almost automatically, adjust to the other as well.

Nationalism

Mennonite relations not only with the Canadian government, but with the idea of the Canadian nation, and with the real people who populate that nation, have affected Mennonite identity to a considerable degree during their stay here. The government of Canada has attempted to monopolize political agency of most sorts within the Canadian state (Kymlicka 1998:25), which has left Mennonites very little freedom to act autonomously, except in those areas of life in which the government takes little interest. In Russia, and when they first arrived in Canada, Mennonites had a great deal of freedom to decide their own collective land-holding patterns (Urry 1989:55; Francis 1955:102), the character of their own civil administrations (Urry 1989:132; Neufeld 1989:16), and the language of education in their schools (Ens, Adolf 1994a:107), for example. Francis (1955:82) suggests Mennonite autonomy in Manitoba was primarily the result of a weak and poorly organized frontier government there at first, and that the government imposed firmer cultural influence on the people soon after it became capable of that. Manitoba Mennonites first encountered Canadian nationalism in that way, but more constantly, and in other ways, after they moved to the city. A discussion of nationalism and Canadian nationalism, as well as Mennonite responses to it, will help clarify some things about Mennonite ethnic identity in Winnipeg the way it is today.

Let me start by pointing out that every nationalist identity is certainly an ethnic identity, although not every ethnic identity includes a nationalist ambition (Appadurai 1996:159; Gellner 1994:35). Nationalism includes a sense of social organization, basically just like ethnicity's, but it also includes particular ideas about how that social organization should be expressed politically. Essentially, a nationalist identity includes the conviction that certain people are tied somehow to a certain area of land, that they should collectively possess some kind of cultural hegemony there, and that that land area should be regulated by

a state government which is both subject to the nation, and also its most potent expression (Appadurai 1996:146-147; Gellner 1983:7). Ernest Gellner (1983:7) argues that the primary goal of every nationalist ideology is to achieve that kind of congruence between culture, ethnicity, and the territory of that nationalist group's own state. According to Gellner (1983:1), a nationalist ambition holds that everyone in the world with a particular nationalist identity should be living in that nation's state, and that no one else should live there. The government of such a nation-state maintains legitimacy because the people of the nation believe that their government is a rightful part of their nation, rather than being an interest to which they are subservient (Anderson 1983:82), and because people believe they are likely to gain more by cooperating in the shared, formalized national system than by attempting to live outside it (Douglas 1986:22). As one might imagine, culture and identity are reified in this process, so as to seem unquestionable and broadly equally shared by the members of a nation, even when they are not (Foster 1991:236). Other than that, nationalist identities vary about as much in their character as ethnic identities generally do. Maybe no state has ever achieved such a nationalist project to any complete degree (Herzfeld 1997:2-4), but even so, nationalism has become a pervasive and influential ideology everywhere in the world during the last two centuries (Anderson 1983:25, 28).

One of the big differences between ethnicity and nationalism is the character of the relationship between identity and territory that the words imply. Ethnic identity need not be tied to territory the way national identity invariably is. In fact, one of the strengths of ethnicity as a kind of social organization is its indifference to location. Ethnic identity can create compellingly meaningful bonds between people living in many states, as it does for Sikhs, for example (Appadurai 1996:38), or Chinese people (Mah 1995:7). This does not mean homelands are not sometimes important aspects of ethnic identity. Migrants commonly relate in some way to the places they have left (Appadurai 1996:41). Appadurai (1996: 38, 49) describes another way that migrants and deterritorialized people can relate their ethnic identities to invented homelands, which might be their ancestral homelands, but which exist in their present form

"only in the imagination of the deterritorialized groups" (Appadurai 1996:49). His example of that is Khalistan, which he calls "the invented homeland of the deterritorialized Sikh population of England, Canada, and the United Sates" (Appadurai 1996:38). Also, as in Knutsson's (1969:99) example of the Arsi, which I mentioned earlier, ethnic identities that are related to territory can be so without implying the aspiration for hegemony there that nationalist identities will always involve.

While relationships with homelands contribute compellingly to many ethnic identities (Appadurai 1996:49), Canadian Mennonites really have nothing like that to which to relate. One might suppose the Mennonite homeland could be Russia, the place from which Mennonites came to Manitoba, but history books never suggest that. An exception might be Al Reimer (1988:261), who writes compellingly of a visit he made to old Mennonite sites in the Soviet Union, and of the people he met there, and calls Russia "the ancestral home that had lain buried within me all my life." That is the only time in the English literature I found Russia referred to that way. *Der Bote* prints occasional articles and stories about the lost Mennonite lands in Russia (Kroeger 2000:32; Gerlach 2000:27; Warkentin 2000:33), and maybe for some of those elderly readers, the memory of Mennonite Russia acts as homelands do for others. Conversely, Frank Epp (1974; 1982), an influential Mennonite historian, uses the name Dutch Mennonites, leaving Russia out of the picture entirely. Assinaboine Travel Service, a Mennonite-owned travel agency in Winnipeg, had been offering heritage tours of sites significant to Mennonite history in Germany, The Netherlands, Poland, and the Ukraine (find one advertised in the *MB Herald* 21(4):17). I spoke to no one about tours they had taken of those Mennonite places, but these are plane and bus tours, lead by an "expert guide," and I wonder if their relationship to ethnic identity might not be more like reading a history book than like maintaining a social relationship or making a political statement. I think there is no place that functions within Mennonite ethnic identity the way Québec, the place, is a part of Québecois identity (Watson 1996:42), or North Korea relates to the identity of Koreans in Japan (Ryang 1997:246).

Canadian Nationalism

If Gellner's conception of the matter describes typical nationalisms, then there must be a peculiar version of nationalist ideology in English-speaking Canada today. In a way, Gellner's definition of nationalism is better for understanding more homogenous populations, such as Iceland or South Korea, than for describing pluralist modern Canada. It might be possible to argue that Canada is basically composed entirely of ethnic minorities, the identities of all of which somehow find meaningful expression within the Canadian state (Kymlicka 1998:5). Maybe the nineteen percent of Canadians who apply only the ethnic label Canadian to themselves are an exception to the rule (Kalbach and Kalbach 1999:11). In a sense, those nineteen percent might also be a minority, but if that makes those people a kind of ethnic minority, it would be quite a different kind than other Canadian ethnic minorities, since a Canadian identity is generally assumed to be simultaneous with the minority identities of all Canadians (Keohane 1997:4; Kymlicka 1998:25). Canadian identity is complicated. Following Barth's (1969a:31) definition of a minority, though, Mennonites are a minority in Canada because one can engage in any aspect of life in Canada as a Canadian, and Mennonite Canadians can do that, too, but one can engage in only some activities in Canada as a Mennonite. While Mennonites are majoral Canadians in many matters, in others, they form an ethnic minority. I will argue that there are many parts of their lives that are inclusively Canadian, but not Mennonite, and also others which are exclusively Mennonite within Canada.

When I write about Canadians in my essay, I actually mean only English Canadians, not Canadian citizens. For my purposes, the label English Canada encompasses all those Canadian citizens who do not actively identify themselves with any other nationalist ideology. The sovereignist movement in Québec is the obvious example of such a nationalism. I do not understand native self-government movements well enough to comment on those, but I would want to leave supporters of those movements out of my English Canada category, too. Somewhat ironically, the term English Canada (or English-

speaking Canada, or Anglo-Canada), broadly used, can equally include Franco-Manitobans, some of the Cree-speakers in the North End of Winnipeg, and migrants recently arrived from abroad, as well as all the many Canadians, including Mennonites, Ukrainians, Chinese, and so many others, who actually do prefer the English language, and might even be limited to it.

There are certainly many cultural traits that a majority of Anglo-Canadians have come to share. Notable among those are speaking the English language, ideas about social equality, and meritocratic ambitions related to personal achievement within a democratic capitalist framework (Gwyn 1995:83; Kymlicka 1998:23). Keohane (1997:83, 98) has argued quite differently, that maybe something simple and ambiguous, like the desire to live well together in our diversity and not feel dominated by any outside entity, is what really ties Canadians together. Living well together in our diversity demands a certain amount of accommodation of each other, though, so no matter what is making us Canadian, there is a limit to the degree of cultural diversity that Canada can well accommodate (Kymlicka 1998:23). In part, Canadian nationalism represents the cultural agreements Canadians make to accommodate themselves to one another in their shared cultural spaces in this place, Canada. Agreeing in this way is what makes us Canadians.

Let me get back to my questioning of the appropriateness of my use of Gellner's definition of nationalism, now. The fact of the matter is that a relatively narrow version of nationalism has been tried in Canada, and it seems to have had an enduring effect on many Mennonites (Ens, Adolf 1994b:83). Until the 1960s, despite the real multi-cultural and poly-ethnic character of Canada's population, official policy placed the expectation on immigrants that they conform to some Canadian conception called Anglo norms (Kymlicka 1998:44). Part of the governmental attitude about the importance of Anglicizing new Canadians might be represented by a quotation from Manitoba premier Rodmond Roblin, who said in 1906, that any immigrant "who objects to perpetuating the glories of our flag and declines to have his children infused with British patriotism, is a man that is undesirable" (Ens, Adolf 1994a:117). That is a very clear example of the kind of nationalist attitude Gellner was

talking about. Some of the Anglo norms which Mennonites once found offensive, such as participating in municipal politics and following government school curricula (Ens, Adolf 1994a:70, 116), are still expected of every Canadian today (Kalbach and Kalbach 1999:12), but nationalist rhetoric has changed a lot, and so have government attitudes about culture and identity. In 1971, in response to the on-going process of general, but incomplete, cultural convergence and simultaneously continuing ethnic separateness, the federal government officially adopted the multi-culturalism policy, conscientiously promoting pluralism through, for example, changes to school curricula, media regulations, and artistic and academic funding policies (Kymlicka 1998:15, 36; Kirtz 1996:9).

There is a very pertinent question in a discussion of Mennonite ethnic identity as to whether it is the multiculturalism of the present day that is affecting present identity more, or if it is the attempt the federal government made in the past at imposing some sort of Anglicizing nationalism that has had the greater impact on modern Mennonites. Nearly all of the serious conflicts Mennonites in Canada have had with their government occurred during the period before the adoption of the multi-culturalism policy (Regehr 1996:125). The extreme example is the school crisis that lead 6000 (3250 from Manitoba) or so relatively conservative Mennonites to leave for Mexico after 1923 (Epp, F. 1982:605). Similarly, the only serious problems German-speaking Mennonites have corporately had getting along with their nationalistic Canadian neighbours took place during the two world wars (Ens, Adolf 1994a:199; Regehr 1996:41), also long before multi-culturalism officially became something iconically Canadian. As I will describe shortly, and as has been described more thoroughly elsewhere (Epp, F. 1982; Regehr 1996; Loewen, R. 1993a; 1993b; Ens, Adolf 1994a; Ens, G. 1989; Francis 1955), most of the major Canadianizing cultural changes among Mennonites in Manitoba were well underway by 1971, the year multi-culturalism was legislated, so I suppose it must be the historic attempt to Anglicize the Mennonites, and not the more recent effort to encourage them to express themselves, that has had the greater effect on their identity in the present. The result seems to be that Mennonites are fairly willing cultural

conformists within Canada, these days, and much less willing to express their distinctive cultural traditions publicly. Part of the Mennonite hesitancy concerning cultural distinctness is also related to some religious ambitions, and I will discuss that later.

I will return to the main themes of the essay soon. First, let me mention a very interesting alteration in Mennonite society, and a subsequent adaptation of Mennonite identity, that can be attributed partly to a wartime policy of the nationalistic Canadian government. Regehr (1996:35) reports that about 4500 of the approximately 16 000 Mennonite men who would have been eligible for the draft did serve in the armed forces, and that 7500 more performed alternative service of one sort or another, because they believed it was morally wrong to participate in the war. More interesting than participation or non-participation though, was the effect that facing the issues surrounding the war had on Mennonites. From their experiences as conscientious objectors, the first time some young men had really ever left their Mennonite enclaves, many of them learned both that the non-Mennonite world was less bad a place than they had supposed, and also that they were capable of doing things there that were both appreciated, and that they liked to do (Regehr 1996:60-61). Many people learned from the conscientious objectors' experiences that Mennonites could participate productively in Canadian society on terms that were amenable to them (Regehr 1996:125). That lesson was one of a few that would, in combination, develop into the service ethic, which has now become quite a central part of Mennonite life (Regehr 1996:61; Mathies 1995:121; MBCI 1997:14). Koontz (1996:61) argues that voluntary service is a more compelling aspect of Mennoniteness for some Mennonites than theology. Regehr (1996:65, 73) goes on to explain that voluntary service efforts, such as teaching school in remote communities, or working as nurses or unskilled attendants in facilities for the mentally ill or the elderly, remained quite popular even after the war. Volunteering became a way that Mennonites who had participated in the military could reaffirm their loyalty to their Mennonite communities, and it became a way that Mennonites could express their continuing collective dedication to Canada after the tense war years. In this way, the development of

the service ethic was partially due to an intentional response to the wartime policy of the nationalist Canadian government, and also partially an unintentional result of it. Just as it seems unlikely that the Russian government intended to change Mennonite identity, Germanizing it, by demanding in 1800 that Mennonites use German for official correspondence, not the Dutch which many of them would have preferred (Urry 1989:71), there is no reason to suppose the government of Canada expected its conscientious objector policy would contribute to an alteration of Mennonite self-conception and ambition. The histories of Mennonite organizations such as the Mennonite Central Committee, Mennonite Voluntary Service, Mennonite Disaster Service, or Mennonite Brethren Missions and Service involve much more than what I have just described here, but they are all expressions of the Mennonite service ethic.

The Market

Economic activity within a Canadian context has been the other big influence on Mennonite identity in Winnipeg. According to Barth (1969a:16), economic cooperation is the activity most likely to integrate people, and Redekop, Ainlay, and Siemens' (1995:24) observation that, over the years, the market has been the strongest Canadianizing influence on Mennonites is consistent with that. Economic integration within a plural society is simultaneously one of the ways Mennonites participate as Canadians, and one of the reasons they take that role. Mennonites sometimes modify the forms or meanings of their capitalist economic activities, but rarely to such a degree that they thereby become unable to participate effectively within broader Canadian contexts.

The desire for economic success in Canada basically comes from Mennonite individuals themselves. Most of the reasons for Mennonite urbanization listed in the 'Urbanization' section above were basically economic. Although there were exceptions to the trend, such as missionaries (Thiessen, A. 1991[1955]:4), and maybe some theology students (Regehr 1996:265), everything I have read in the literature suggests to me that I am representing urbanization accurately by describing it as a practical response to economic

circumstances. If Mennonites did not want to integrate into the Canadian economy, they could conceivably have remained the sort of self-sufficient farmers Royden Loewen (1993a:164) says they once were. Maybe the result would be similar to the lives of wealthy but culturally, politically, and educationally marginal Hutterites in Canada today (Kymlicka 1998:30). The Mennonites in Winnipeg have not chosen that kind of marginality, though.

While the choice to integrate was made by Mennonites, the cultural terms on which economic integration can be achieved are continually established through some sort of loose consensus among Canadians more generally. Mah (1995:8) talks about the influence that Chinese people moving to Canada to establish businesses here have been having on the Canadian economy, and about the influence that the Canadian economic environment has simultaneously been having on their endeavors. All of the Canadians who have collectively been constructing the Canadian economy have been both agents in creating its character, and subjects to one another's demands and preferences. That is important to note, because the cultural changes that have been required in order to participate successfully in the Canadian economy have had an effect on Mennonite ethnic identities. For example, the language of nearly all Canadian business places and economic activities outside Québec is English, and I will describe some of the effect of the adoption of the English language on Mennonite identity in just a little while.[6] Mennonites had long been selling surplus farm produce outside their communities (Urry 1989:93; Epp, F. 1982:362), but selling hogs or wheat is quite a different matter from performing wage labour in the city, running a business there, or launching a professional career. To be successful at that, a certain amount of fitting in, or social acceptability, becomes necessary (Hansen 1952:494; Kymlicka 1998:25). Someone from the business community with whom I spoke seemed nearly to gasp when I asked about the place of Mennonite culture in Mennonite businesses, and answered with the sort of tone a school teacher might use to

[6] I wonder if there is an acceptable range of behaviour into which one's habitus must fit if one is likely to become successful in whatever career or business endeavor in the city in Canada. I have no evidence one way or the other, but I wonder.

correct a presumptuous student, that it is far better to be a cultural Canadian than a cultural Mennonite if you want to get anywhere in life.

Capitalist ideology and Mennonite values are not always quite compatible. People have addressed this conflict in a few ways, including by breaking their formal ties with Mennonite churches (Eby 1986:11), or by participating within the capitalist system, but in a Mennonite way that can be effective within the capitalist system rather than in a clearly idealistically capitalist way (Thiessen, Janis 1999:598; Regehr 1988:64). Sometimes people have found it easiest simply not to worry too much, and just ignore those conflicts on a day to day basis and not make too many sacrifices on either side of the debate (Redekop, Ainlay, and Siemens 1995:114). Whatever the case, many Mennonites have become successful and enthusiastic businesspeople. Upon moving to Winnipeg, many of the newly urban Mennonites started small house construction companies, practiced various trades, or took wage labour, often in Mennonite-owned businesses (Regehr 1996:165-166). Janis Thiessen (1999:589, 591) reports that most of the first 200 or so employees at Mennonite-owned Palliser Furniture were Mennonites, although they no longer predominate there so completely. A good number of Mennonite business ventures, including Palliser Furniture, Grey Goose Bus Lines, Reimer Express, Monarch Industries, and Willmar Windows, eventually became very successful (Driedger 1990:48-55). Regehr (1988:66) argues that as businesses grew, they lost their Mennonite distinctiveness, suggesting the examples I just listed are not really Mennonite businesses any more, although smaller ones might still be. Right in line with that, and simultaneously contradictory, a businessperson I spoke with dismissed the notion of a 'Mennonite business' entirely, and told me the only real difference between Mennonite businesses and others is that Mennonites are more innovative and harder-working. The fact that the answer to my question included a confident characterization of the category 'Mennonite business' suggests that it did indeed exist in that person's mind. The very existence of an organization like the Mennonite Economic Development Associates should remove any doubt that business can legitimately be a Mennonite activity. The question then is not if Mennonites can do business as

Mennonites, but rather how and why their Mennoniteness changed while doing it in Canada. The rest of my paper suggests some answers to that.

Economic activity in Winnipeg is not limited to business endeavors, of course. Roy Vogt (1980:143) has suggested that Mennonites in Winnipeg today favour careers as skilled professionals, such as teachers or health care workers. This allows them to avoid some of the class conflicts inherent in capitalism, and some of the tension between modern Mennonite ethics and common Canadian business practices such as selling cigarettes, working on Sundays, making high profits, or engaging in litigation (Vogt 1980:143; Redekop *et al* 1995:110). At the same time that they allow people to avoid some of the moral problems caused by capitalism, professional careers can keep people wealthy enough to support the Mennonite institutions they value. This is important because those very expensive institutions exist at least partly outside the Canadian state's officially funded infrastructure, and so must, to a great extent, be maintained using privately donated funds. Mennonites need to raise those funds, and being well-paid educated professionals helps them do it. Vogt (1997:138) reports that thirty-two percent of Winnipeg Mennonites were engaged in those sorts of professions in the early 1980s, compared with fourteen percent of the population of Winnipeg as a whole. The level of education that careers in medicine, academics, or education require surely demand a level of English ability much higher than careers selling cars or building additions to houses, and therefore also demand that English be practiced for the years that it takes to learn it that well. Professional careers likely expand people's social circles, and professional educations expand one's awareness of the world, and one's attitudes about certain aspects of it, maybe giving one a different perspective on Mennonites and who they are. This is another effect that economic activity has had on Mennonites and Mennonite ethnic identities.

Mennonite Adaptations in Canada

In the next section, I will describe changes seen in four important areas of Mennonite life. Three of them, language, education, and the breadth and

variety of social contacts people make, had previously been preserves of Mennoniteness, but have become substantially Canadianized by the combined cultural influence of the market and Canadian nationalism. Unlike those three, though, the first of the four I will describe, religion, remains a more entirely Mennonite domain. Mennonite religion has been affected in some significant ways by life in Canada, and I will discuss that a little near the end of the paper. On the other hand, Mennonites have not become integrated with other Canadians in religious matters to the extent that they have in other ways. I will argue that the separateness of the Mennonite religion from broader Canadian identity, and its obvious continuity with Mennonite religion in the past has made it a particularly powerful icon of Mennoniteness now, whereas other cultural characteristics which once distinguished Mennonites from others no longer do to the same degree, and have therefore become less compellingly Mennonite. There have been many changes in Mennonite life, and a lot has stayed the same, but these are four important and telling examples. Over the next twenty pages or so, I will try to address some questions about how and why Mennonites have changed while living in Canada.

The Present Mennonite Fusion of Religion and Ethnicity

I will not try to argue that Mennonites have not always been religious people. Some individuals might have been more religious than others, but religion has always been an important aspect of Mennonite identity (Urry 1989:22; Redekop, J. 1987:19). In fact, religious ideas have at times been so central to Mennonite life that Mennonites have thought of, and talked about, their separation from others in religious terms, although Francis (1955:84) makes the point that that separation has long had important secular aspects as well. What has changed a great deal in the past few decades, maybe especially in the city, is the place of religion in Mennonite ethnic identity, or the relationship between religion and ethnic identity among Mennonites. Mennonite religious ideas and activities have become a relatively much more predominant part of Mennonite identity in Winnipeg now than they had been in the rural past. This does not mean that Mennonites are more religious now than

they once were. What it means is that more of the things they do distinctly as Mennonites are religious now than had been the case in the past, when Mennonites could do many sorts of things, such as farm, or build houses, or speak, distinctly as Mennonites. This new close association of religion and ethnic identity is mostly good for Canadian Mennonites, although some drawbacks will become clear later in the essay. As I mentioned earlier, ethnic identity changes constantly, as the banks of a river change constantly, so that although we might not notice the change, ethnicity is part of a constant process of diachronically connected but changing identities, the present always in the process of becoming the future. In the present version of Mennonite ethnic identity, there are few recognized ways to express Mennoniteness socially that are not religious in some way, or sponsored by some religious organization. That has not always been the case. It is a new relationship of ethnic identity and religion. It has always been the case that Mennonite ethnicity was tightly interconnected with Mennonite religion, and that is relevant to what I am saying here, but that relationship has been different in the past.

As I will discuss again later, Mennonite religion now includes a certain number of people who are not ethnic Mennonites, changing the social meaning of many Mennonite religious activities. The result of this simultaneous focusing of Mennonite identity on religion and the broadening of Mennonite religion to include more kinds of people has been a new kind of fusion of Mennonite ethnic and religious identities. A few people have addressed the issue of the fusion of Mennonite religious and ethnic identities already. I think Denny Weaver (1988:120, 124-125) is on basically the right track, but takes things too far, when he argues that ethnic identity defined Mennonites for much of their history, but that Mennonites have lately turned their energy to religion as the new carrier of their identity. Harry Loewen (1997:11) argues conversely that there are still many Mennonites who believe being Mennonite has more to do with ethnicity than with faith. Ross McCormack (1997:112) maintains that the church does not dominate public representations of Mennoniteness to the degree that some suppose, since social influence is shared by more formal and informal institutions than just the church, citing "Menno Simons College, the Steinbach

Automobile Dealer's [sic] Association, [and] the southern Manitoba literati" as examples. Mennonite identity in Winnipeg involves more than just religious feeling and religious institutions, just as there was more to Mennonite identity in the past than only farming, religion, and speaking German, but Mennoniteness is dominated by the church now in a way that one need not have expected sixty years ago.

Narrow religious doctrine is something unrelated to my point that I hope will not become confusing in my argument. Neufeld (1989:15) tells how Manitoba Mennonites tried to enforce a narrower cultural and religious orthodoxy on one another after they first arrived in Canada than they do now.[7] I do not want to say that modern Mennonite religion is restrictive, only that it is a proportionately more dominant part of Mennonite ethnicity than it had been in the past. Indeed, Mennonites seem quite culturally liberal right now relative to the attitudes of their ancestors at some periods in history (Neufeld 1989:15). Also, and incidentally, Royden Loewen (1993b:111) mentions conflicts between conservatives and people advocating change in several Canadian immigrant churches during the years when members were just establishing themselves in Canada, so Neufeld's account of the past should not make Mennonites unique.

The fact that Mennonites were religious in the past seems inconsequential to an examination of them in the present, because nearly everyone in Europe was religious in the past (Anderson 1983:16). Others, such as Jews, Ukrainians, and Doukhobors, who arrived in Canada from Europe brought their religions with them, too, just as Mennonites did (Loewen, R. 1993b:111). Mennonites are also similar to other Canadians today, such as Jews (Kallen 1977:122), Sikhs (Chadney 1984:142), Québecois (Boulanger 2000:R1), Icelanders (Matthiasson 1983:339), or some Dutch Canadians (Van Dijk 1998:25), for whom religion remains an important aspect of ethnic identity in Canada. The point I want to make here, and this is something interesting about Mennonites, is the degree to which they have focused their identity and social organization in Canada on their religion, disregarding many other

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[7] Barth (1969a:36) suggests it is common for people to enforce strict conformity on one another in situations where they feel some external threat.

aspects of life which could be ethnically iconic for them, but are not. It seems unlike what many other migrants to Canada have done. For example, while Matthiasson (1983:339) emphasizes the important place of churches in Icelandic Canadian life, he says Icelandic ethnicity here has more to do with volunteer organizations, an active Icelandic press (publishing mostly in English now), and Icelandic and Icelandic Canadian history (Matthiasson 1983:332-333, 339). Unlike that example, Mennonite preferences have combined with circumstances in Canada to change and to limit the scope of what Mennonites do in Mennonite ways, or on Mennonite terms, to matters generally centred in religion now. Even the Mennonite press and volunteer agencies are closely associated with the church.

There is an interesting parallel between Canadian Jews and Canadian Mennonites. For the expression of Jewish ethnicity in Canada, religion is generally central, too. Without suggesting that Jewish faith is not something meaningful or valuable in itself, or that it is not vital to religious Jews, Evelyn Kallen (1977:122) argues that some Canadian Jews participate in religious activities less for religious reasons than for ethnic ones. She says they find that religion is a good way to express Jewishness here, since most other aspects of their lives are quite thoroughly integrated with the lives of other Canadians. Similarly, Harry Loewen (1997:11) observes that some Canadian Mennonites who would like their churches to be more open to converting others find those efforts are hindered by people for whom being Mennonite has more to do with ethnicity than with religion. The difference between the place of religion in Jewish and Mennonite ethnicity seems to me to lie in the way Mennonites and Jews fuse the two, ethnicity and religion, together. Secular Jews are able to maintain an influential, albeit controversial, place in world Jewry (Halkin 1998:55), but Sawatsky (1991:115) suggests there is a desire among Christian Mennonites to marginalize secular Mennonites, and I perceive there has been no organized reply made to that by Mennonites outside the church. Similarly, although it might not have possible in the past, Québecois can now be Québecois without being Roman Catholic (Sawatsky 1994:91), but of Mennonites, it is a question in many peoples' minds now whether one can

properly be a Mennonite outside the church (Sawatsky 1991:115; Wiebe and Wiebe 1997:7). As I already mentioned, most activities are organized through the church, with few Mennonite alternatives. Maybe every attempt at social organization marginalizes someone, but my point is that Mennonites in the present give religious activity a place in Mennonite identity which is prominent relative to the place of religion in the identity of most contemporary Canadians.

Mennonite self-identity has always included religion (Urry 1989:22), but it has at other times involved a greater diversity of important ethnic icons than it seems to now. Here are some accounts of Mennonite identity from the past that seem to suggest the church, and religion, have not always been as pervasive in Mennonite life as they seem today. Bernie Wiebe (1988:313-314), telling about his childhood in rural Manitoba in the 1940s, writes that farming was the centre of their lives. No one in his family read the Bible often, and his parents took their children to church only occasionally. Wiebe does not suggest that their attitude toward religion caused anyone to question their Mennoniteness. Others also describe farming (Siemens, R. 1999:120; Driedger 1988b:38) and language (Hamm 1987:88; Kraybill 1996:28; Friesen, V. 1988:18) as having been vital parts of Mennonite identity. As one would expect, I found no evidence that farming is an important part of Mennonite identity in the city, and I will talk some more about the marginal place of German and Plautdietsch in modern Mennonite life a little further along in the essay. Frieda Klippenstein (1997:144) says that for women, who had long been limited in their participation in the church, the extended family was the centre of Mennonite life, and Mennonite community had as much to do with cooperation through family connections as with institutional events in churches. Both Neufeld (1989:16), regarding rural Manitoba, and Urry (1989:132) concerning Mennonite Russia, describe civil governments that once ordered Mennonite society, but there is no place for anything like that in Canada anymore. John Toews (1995:52) looks at the military response of some Mennonites to the threats of the Russian Revolution of 1919, and concludes they valued their land and lifestyle more than they valued religiously based ethics. He does not mention that anyone in Russia then doubted those people were Mennonites, and neither does he,

himself, seem to, despite their conscious violation of religious values. Mennonites in Winnipeg today have no particular place or lifestyle, separate from other Canadians, that I can imagine them defending through whatever means, so that cannot be the basis of their ethnic identity anymore either, but it must once have been. Those were all once parts of Mennonite identity, but no longer are to any great degree. Religion, on the other hand, has not fallen off the list.

Religion and religious institutions are in many ways a reasonable choice as the focus of Mennonite ethnic identity. First of all, many Mennonites have strong religious convictions, so they would be participating in the church anyway. The Canadian government demands that all citizens learn one of the official languages (Kirtz 1996:8), and Mennonites have embraced English, so Mennonite languages are no longer as good an icon of ethnicity as they once were. Mennonites have no homeland to which to relate their ethnic identities, either. There are Mennonite architectural traditions (Loewen, R. 1993a:175), but those are not celebrated in public places the way China Towns in Canadian cities celebrate images of Chinese architecture. The Russian Mennonites in Winnipeg have no remarkable traditional dances or costumes to display, so there are few celebrations of Mennonite folk art.[8] Also, Mennonites' physical features do not usually allow Mennonites or other Canadians to identify them on sight as Mennonites. Since the government's only serious concern with religion among Canadians, as guaranteed by the Charter of Rights and Freedoms (Elliott 1983:486), is that Canadians all be free to pursue their religions as they please (Kymlicka 1998:47), Mennonite religious activities remain a viable focus of Mennonite ethnic identity, when many other aspects of Mennonite culture from the past no longer do. Separating ethnic identity from religious institutions leaves Mennonites with only relatively weak, and relatively contextually limited ethnic icons, ones which might not support a strong ethnic identity, or unite diverse people as compellingly as religion is presently able to do.

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[8] Mavis Reimer (1997:122) mentions traditional Mennonite quilts, but says few people make them anymore.

Religion remains something many Mennonites in the Canadian cultural environment can identify strongly and easily with. Religion had been the reason Anabaptists separated themselves from other people in the first place (Loewen, H. 1980:91), and it has always been an important part of Mennonite life (Urry 1989:22). In the city, where Mennonites are often much more dispersed than they are in rural enclave towns, churches have also been social centres around which many activities have been organized (Harder, M. 1998:6). An interesting analogy might be the role of the Serbian Orthodox Church in Serb ethnicity in Tito's Yugoslavia. Gabriel Partos (1997:96-97) says that although Serbs had held nationalist ambitions and maintained political organizations of their own before the formation of the Yugoslavian state, those were dissolved by Tito's government. In Yugoslavia, Serb identity instead became focused in, and organized through, the Serbian Orthodox Church. Serbian ethnic activity in the church became so pervasive that Macedonians, who had been participating in it, broke off and formed a new, independent body they called the Macedonian Orthodox Church. The Macedonian church was not theologically different than the Serb church, but it was different because it was not a Serb ethnic organization. When the Yugoslav state disintegrated, Serbs again formed Serbian ethnic and nationalist organizations outside the church. Threats of war excepted, I think Mennonite identity has become focused on their religion in a way similar to the Yugoslavian Serbs. Ethnicity and religion have become quite fused. If in some as-yet-unimaginable future, Mennonites uproot themselves from their Canadian homes, or resolve for some reason to withdraw from Canadian society,[9] ethnic identity, maybe in some quite Canadian cultural form, might imaginably become predominant in Mennonite secular affairs again, as it had been in the past. I realize that it is far more likely that Mennonites in Canada will become a religious organization, and cease to express or value any ethnic identity at all (Sawatsky 1991:114), but that has not yet happened.

Language

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[9] In a letter to the editor of the *Mennonite Reporter*, Albrecht (1997:9) all but advocates they do withdraw, so the hypothetical future I am suggesting to make my point is only a little bit absurd.

Recall from the section called 'Ethnicity' that language can be a compelling ethnic icon (Fishman 1989:32). The use of Plautdietsch or German is no longer an important part of the self-identity of many of the Mennonites in Winnipeg, but it certainly once was (Friesen, V. 1988:22). The switch in Mennonite language use was simultaneously a cause and an effect of changing Mennonite ethnic identity. On the one hand, the replacement of Plautdietsch and German with English as the Mennonite language of daily use was a response to their place in Canadian society, and also to their changing identity as Canadians. On the other hand, once German and Plautdietsch ceased being integral aspects of people's daily lives, they could no longer be the compelling Mennonite icons they had previously been.

English made a heavy entrance into Mennonite life in 1916. At that time, most Mennonites used two languages amongst themselves, and spoke English, if they were able, usually only with English-speaking non-Mennonites. The two Mennonite languages, Plautdietsch and a form of standard German, matched Ferguson's (1959) diglossic low and high pretty typically, with Plautdietsch being used generally for everyday affairs, and German being used as a literary language and for religious functions (Friesen, V. 1988:20). In 1916, the government of Manitoba passed The Manitoba Schools Act, which forbade bilingual education in public schools, as well as religious education in the classroom, and demanded that all Manitoba school children attend public, not private, schools (Ens, Adolf 1994a:116). This law was acceptable to some Mennonites (Ens, Adolf 1994a:144), but problematic for others (Ens, Adolf 1994a:138). Some people left Canada in the 1920s then, to protect their right to educate their children and to speak their own language (Ens, Adolf 1994a:216), but most stayed and adapted.

English had been becoming more common among Mennonites during the Second World War, when German-speaking people who refused to join the military became particularly unpopular in Canada (Regehr 1996:41). The influx of Mennonite refugees from Europe immediately following the war made English an impractical language for Mennonites again, though, and many people returned to the diglossia of German and Plautdietsch (Regehr 1996:99).

The English language generally first appeared in Winnipeg Mennonite churches in the Sunday school rooms, in the 1950s, because English was the language that the little children spoke best (Regehr 1996:229; Enns, E. 1986:65). This might have been because parents were speaking English with their children at home,[10] but even if they were not, the children were speaking English at school and with whatever non-Mennonites they might have encountered elsewhere, too, so they did need to speak it well. Maybe there is something to learn from a couple I spoke with in Winnipeg in 1998. They told me that although Plautdietsch was an important, nearly vital, part of their social life, their children spoke it only poorly. They thought their children could spend their time better learning other things, and so Plautdietsch was basically being sacrificed. They said they felt a little sorry about that, but that it seemed best.

Plautdietsch is not very common among Mennonites in Winnipeg anymore. I asked around looking for someone who was teaching classes in Plautdietsch, but no one I spoke with could think of a class like that. I finally found one person who had taught an introductory course in Plautdietsch in a church basement during the winter of 1997-98. He said it went well. He taught it again as a non-credit course at the Canadian Mennonite Bible College (CMBC) the next year. I checked the CMBC web site (mbnet.mb.ca/~cmbc/index2.html), and they are offering two non-credit courses in spoken Plautdietsch for the 2000-01 school year, and one in Plautdietsch literature. I found two sources in the literature (Enns, E. 1986:42; Rempel, H. 1996:6) who claim that many Manitoba Mennonites still speak Plautdietsch at home and place great significance on it, but the only people I encountered in Winnipeg who were speaking it were elderly. Victor Friesen (1988:22) suggests the last, and dying, Canadian preserves of Plautdietsch are nursing homes, despite a recent nostalgic revival of it. Maybe Plautdietsch-speaking Mennonites migrating from Latin America will affect the future of Plautdietsch in Manitoba, but some of them also prefer to learn English (Heinrichs, M. 1996:12).

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[10] Someone I asked about this matter told me they spoke German in their home in those days, not Plautdietsch or English, which must have been a little unusual, according to Victor Friesen (1988:22).

It seems to me that the predominance of literary German as a Mennonite language must have begun to subside a little later, although Lohrenz (1974:2) describes the situation the other way around. Some Mennonites still feared in 1939 that one might not be able to be a good Christian speaking a language other than German (Hamm 1987:93; Ens, Anna 1996:118). That sounds a little extreme, and some others only wanted church services conducted in German because they could not speak English, or because they felt most comfortable engaged in religious activities in the traditional German (Regehr 1996:313). Others were less concerned about language than about the ideas that the words expressed (Stoesz, D. 1985:16). The first English church service at the First Mennonite Church was held on February 24, 1963, despite strong opposition to the idea as late as 1959, but after the Sunday schools had already switched to English some years before (Enns, E. 1986:65). By 1967 most weddings at First Mennonite were already in English, but in 1986, most funerals were still conducted in German, suggesting language preference was correlated with age (Enns, E. 1986:66). Home Street Mennonite Church added English to its church services in 1957, and made that their only language on Sunday mornings starting in 1962 (Stoesz, D. 1985:16). Notably, a year later, some number of the members of the Home Street church split off and founded their own new church, which used German exclusively (Stoesz, D. 1985:16). Other churches have similar histories of controversy surrounding the issue, ending with the eventual adoption of English (Ens, Anna 1996:118; Regehr 1996:314). English had become so pervasive by 1968, that the proposed new Constitution and Bylaws of the General Conference Mennonite Church were published in English in the German language paper *Der Bote*. They were not even translated (Gen. Conf. M. 1968:5-6). Anna Ens (1996:195) mentions the River East Menno Gemeinde, a Mennonite congregation composed mostly of migrants from Paraguay, as the only Mennonite church in Winnipeg today that makes German its primary language.

For many years, some Winnipeg Mennonites operated German language schools of their own, where parents sent their children for extra classes after school or on Saturday. Children who attended there learned both how to speak

German and something about being Mennonite. A few authors describe those kinds of classes (Enns, E. 1986:42; Lousier *et al* 1975:7; Unruh 1953:40; Regehr 1996:224). Regehr (1996:231) lists three reasons that Mennonites wanted their children to learn German. If everyone spoke German and could communicate effectively with one another, it would inhibit the formation of any disruptive generation gap. German also continued to be many Mennonites' preferred religious language, and, Regehr argues, it was the language that represented Mennonite heritage for many people. It was worth maintaining as a living language for those reasons.

The question then becomes, why did Mennonites switch to English? In Winnipeg, populated by what have been, at the time of their various arrivals, a polyglot choir of migrants, English has been everyone's lingua franca. If Mennonites were to make their living there, they would need to learn it, too. Since Winnipeg Mennonites have been being educated in English for the past eighty-four years (Ens, Adolf 1994a:116), and practice it every day in their regular interactions with their neighbours, it seems inevitable that they would develop a considerable mastery of the language. Following Sapir (1921:22), who maintains that every language is equally good at doing what it does, it is presumable that English, once learned, can be just as flexible, authoritative and expressive as German, and if learned in childhood, just as comfortable or warm as Plautdietsch. If using English alone gives Mennonites nearly everything that the old diglossia did, except for obvious cultural distinctiveness, and provides them with the bonus of being able to become, in one more way, apparently majoral Canadians, maybe it has been worth the loss of language. By analogy, Matthiasson (1983:335) reports that Icelandic Canadians voluntarily switched the language of instruction at their private schools to English in 1875, to gain just that advantage: membership in the majority.

Another push to replace German with English was the new desire to win Christian converts. Post-war Mennonites, influenced by evangelical Christians from the United States, as well as the Ontarian Swiss Mennonite George Brunk, had begun wanting that. Brunk advocated that English was the most reasonable language to use in order to make Mennonite Christianity attractive

to a broader audience, and that became a reason for some people to support a switch to English (Regehr 1996:210). A little bit similarly, some people were marrying non-Mennonites in those days, and bringing them into churches. By using English, Mennonites could include those people without excluding English-speaking Mennonites (Ens, Anna 1996:118).

Social Contacts

Bernie Wiebe (1988:313), who spent his youth in Altona, Manitoba, in the 1930s and 1940s, tells that social difference there concerned questions of what kind of Mennonite people were, whether Sommerfelder, or Bergthaler, or something else. It was unnecessary to add that those people were Mennonites, because for him, as a child in those days, the known world consisted entirely of Mennonites. Driedger and Bergen (1995:147) explain that on the farm, Mennonite social networks were nearly pre-established, and people were practically born into them, and Klippenstein (1997:144) concurs, that extended family was central to Mennonite social life in the rural past. Al Dueck (1988:217) suggests that many Mennonites in those days grew up to be poorly suited to social life outside their relatively homogenous enclaves. Times change, though, and by the 1960s, any high degree of social separation had become both impractical and impracticable for Mennonites all over Manitoba (Ens, Anna 1996:117), but I guess it had become so for Winnipeggers nearly as soon as they arrived in the city.

Because Mennonites generally do not experience social stigmatization in Canada now, the advantages of social isolation do not usually outweigh the disadvantages (Redekop *et al* 1995:222). Racism has been, and remains, a serious disadvantage for visible minorities in Canada (Kymlicka 1998:80), but Mennonites here are not hindered by anti-Mennonite discrimination. Social isolation was desirable for culturally distinct immigrants who were uncomfortable with much of what they found in Canada when they first arrived. It is also preferable for people, such as Hutterites, who choose to limit the number and character of the ethical dilemmas they are likely to face in life by limiting the diversity of their social contacts (Neufeld 1989:209; Ens, Adolf

1994a:41). On the other hand, social integration in the city means Mennonites have the opportunity to meet a greater diversity of people, and can likely interact with them on social terms comfortable for everyone involved. This affords Mennonites advantages such as broader economic opportunities. It also gives them access to a kind of cultural richness which comes from the ability to engage in comfortable conversation with whomever else in the city a particular Mennonite individual might find something in common, want to cooperate with, or from whom it might seem good to learn. Cultural integration also provides Mennonites with the ability to understand works of art, scholarship, and the communications media as insiders, on Canadian terms, instead of exclusively as Mennonites, which would mean those things which had been produced by non-Mennonites, or outsiders, and should be interpreted as such (Barth 1969a:31). Canada is a culturally rich place, and socially integrated Mennonites have access to that.

Social integration need not be any sort of compromise of one's Mennoniteness. In order to be Mennonites, people must be able to find or create both socially and personally satisfying relationships with others, and the means to represent their Mennoniteness to themselves and others. As I mentioned earlier, cultural change might be accompanied by changes in the way ethnic identity is expressed or conceived, but cultural change need not have any effect on the ethnic identity that people ascribe to themselves, nor on the connectedness they feel with the people from that label's history (Barth 1969a:9).

One aspect of the trade-off Mennonites made for broader social participation was articulated compellingly by Gerhard Lohrenz (1974:2-3) long ago, maybe soon after it became clear that the trade-off had been made by a great number of Winnipeg Mennonites. His most interesting argument was that, by making compromises in the city and changing the way they did things as Mennonites, people had introduced unknowns and inconsistencies[11] into the rationale for their actions. That does not mean those people necessarily

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[11] It might seem that what were introduced were new unknowns and new inconsistencies, but maybe Lohrenz, accustomed to the old ones, did not notice that.

thought themselves less Mennonite, but it meant that not everything was done anymore for the simple reason that it was the way Mennonites did things. Parents could no longer give that as the answer to every child's question (Lohrenz 1974:2). I think that as part of urbanization and Canadianization, Mennonites traded some security to attain greater freedom.

Education

In industrial-bureaucratic states, people need good educations to get good jobs. If they have them, they will more likely be able to feel dignity, security, and respectability, and they will more likely be able to live relatively independent lives. Less well-educated people more often have less money, less social status, and less freedom (Gellner 1983:36). Ernest Gellner (1983:34) suggests that the operation and viability of states depends on the education of their people. He is basically talking about state economics there, but maybe the notion can reasonably be applied to ethnicity, as well. A much more awkward ethnic version of Gellner's statement might go something like 'the generalized dignity and vitality one can feel in their ethnic identity, or which might be attributable to someone simply because of their ascribed ethnic identity, depends a lot on the educations of the people to whom that identity is ascribed.' Gellner (1983:34) goes on to argue that a good education in bureaucratized states like Canada also includes the development of a certain kind of cultural competence. Those are things such as what we learn about food processing in our sciences classes, learning to do math well enough to participate efficiently and judiciously in the bureaucratized money economy, and the ability to interpret advertising appropriately. As is true of anyone, Mennonite individuals would be less well able to participate in Canadian life if they did not have standard Canadian educations that taught them that kind of knowledge.

Of course Mennonite farmers in Manitoba in 1916 could not have known how useful Canadian standard educations would become for their descendants. Although some Mennonites had favoured public education even before the Manitoba Schools Act imposed it on them (Ens, Adolf 1994a:110,

123), both William Neufeld (1989:180) and Adolf Ens (1994a:116) make it quite clear that the reason many Mennonites finally gave up their autonomous schools and curricula was that the government legislated it. Mennonite private school curricula before 1916 involved a fair bit of religious instruction, and much of the coursework was conducted in German (Ens, Adolf 1994a:107), so that sometimes students would finish elementary school without having gained any mastery of English (Ens, Adolf 1994a:119). From the point of view of the government, the big issue in the battle over the 1916 Manitoba Schools Act, when Mennonite village schools were brought under government control, was improving the quality of English language instruction there (Ens, Adolf 1994a:119). For Mennonites who opposed the act, the issues involved the freedom to engage in religious instruction, the use of the German language, and controversy surrounding symbols of allegiance to the state, especially the flag, which many people hesitated to fly in front of their schools. That government legislation concerning school curricula was a turning point both in the character of Mennonite education, and in the Mennonite ability to maintain cultural separateness from the rest of Canada.

Over the years, and especially after the arrival from Russia, in 1923, of many Mennonites who had a more hopeful attitude about education, Canadian public schools became a valued part of many Mennonite villages (Francis 1955:264). The Mennonite Collegiate Institute, in Gretna, Manitoba, became an important institution for the training of teachers (Ens, G. 1989:83), and later, an important step on the way to post-secondary education (Ens, G. 1989:98). Between 1932 and 1947, the number of Mennonites enrolled at the University of Manitoba jumped from nineteen to eighty-eight, and just kept climbing from there (Francis 1955:264). In time, Mennonites came to embrace the educational values and standards of Canadians in general, but continued to keep their own schools as well.

Today, Mennonites operate two elementary schools, two high schools, and two post-secondary schools in Winnipeg. School is, to a considerable extent, where modern children learn to be competent citizens and good people (Gellner 1983:29, 36). Mennonite schools must play an important role in

teaching children how to be Mennonites. Gundy (1990:41) points out that education systems reflect the cultures of the people that support them, and from grade one to grade twelve, Mennonite schools use the government of Manitoba school curricula, augmented by some Mennonite additions (WMES 1997:3; Westgate 1998:3; Neufeld 1989:182), suggesting that they are Canadian schools as well as Mennonite ones. A member of a school board told me there was a bit of opposition to some of the Manitoba curriculum. For example, an elementary school reader had a little story about a witch, which some parents thought Mennonites should not believe in. Despite the objection, the board decided to keep the government materials, because the content of other textbook options seemed less rich than the government books, and because they thought it was important to prepare their children for the cultural environment in Canada, where they were likely going to live.

It is difficult to make a guess at what percentage of Mennonite students are actually attending private schools. Statistics Canada (1993:100) counted 4500 Mennonites younger than fifteen years old, and 3510 more between the ages of fifteen and twenty-four, living in Winnipeg in 1991.[12] Those numbers do not make it clear what percentage of Winnipeg Mennonites in those age brackets are attending school, but the statistics for Mennonite school attendance in all of Canada (Stats Can 1993:121) suggest that most of them are. I could find no enrollment count for Winnipeg Mennonite Elementary Schools (WMES), but there are two schools with fourteen classes between them (WMES 1997:2), so 300 might be a conservative guess. Three hundred twenty-three students attended high school at Westgate Mennonite Collegiate in 1997-98 (Westgate 1998:1), and there were 503 students at the Mennonite Brethren Collegiate Institute (MBCI) in 1990-91 (MBCI 1990:17). Each of those schools accepts non-Mennonites if they have space free (WMES 1997:6; Westgate 1998:4), and in fact about half of the students at MBCI in the middle 1980s were not Mennonites (Neufeld 1989:182), and in 1990, only forty-three percent of them were MBs (MBCI 1990:17). Trying to do the math to guess what proportion of Mennonite children attend Mennonite schools is a little dicey, but it

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[12] I will discuss some strengths and weaknesses of those statistics later in the paper.

looks like a much higher percentage of high schoolers than elementary school kids go to private schools, and it looks as if as many as half of the Mennonite high school students in Winnipeg might be attending Mennonite schools. Tuition starts at $1675 for grade one at WMES (WMES 1997:20), and increases roughly every school year until grades eleven and twelve, which cost a steep $3541 a year at Westgate (Westgate 1998:16), so private school is a big investment.

The two elementary schools are run by the same organization, Winnipeg Mennonite Elementary Schools Inc. (WMES), whose mandate, according to the school handbook (WMES 1997:2), is to provide "quality, Christ-centred education integrating faith and life within a caring school community." The first WMES school was founded in 1981 by local parents and business people who wanted to establish an alternative to the educational environment in public elementary schools (WMES 1997:4). The school expanded over the years, and a second location was opened in 1994 (WMES 1997:4). I spoke to no one at WMES, so I cannot say much about it well, but it seems to me that most of the references in their handbook to things Mennonite are religious references. That includes phrases such as "Anabaptist-Mennonite tradition" (WMES 1997:5), and "the Mennonite story, particularly the story of peace, discipleship and community" (WMES 1997:7), which seem to match Harold Bender's (1944) primarily religious conception of Mennoniteness well. I will discuss Bender later. Their web site (http://www.mbnet.mb.ca/~wmes) says they teach Mennonite history, but gives no details about that. They teach the German language and church music, because those are "areas of study of particular interest to the school's Mennonite constituency" (WMES 1997:5).

The two Mennonite high schools in Winnipeg, Mennonite Brethren Collegiate Institute (MBCI) and Westgate Mennonite Collegiate, are administrated separately, but seem pretty similar in most ways. Rodney Sawatsky (1994:105) concludes that Mennonites have taken a different attitude toward high school than toward post-secondary education. He says they have established only Bible colleges, not the sort of liberal arts colleges that Mennonites in the United States have, because they find the Canadian public

post-secondary educational options generally adequate. Bible college educations are additional to secular post-secondary education, but high school educations have been treated differently. Like the elementary schools, the Mennonite high schools in Winnipeg provide their students with the government high school curriculum in full, supplemented by additional material. Looking at the MBCI web site (http://www.mbci.mb.ca), I found only German language and religion classes additional to the public school curricula, although Neufeld (1989:183) reports that part of the MBCI mandate is to "teach students to value their heritage." At Westgate, they teach those two extra subjects, as well as Mennonite history and church music (Westgate 1997:3, 31). Both Mennonite high schools take school time to have students do voluntary service of one sort or another (MBCI 1997:14; Siemens, C. 1997:12). I can say little about the social environment there, but advertising for both schools plays atmosphere up as something that makes them special. The Westgate calendar (1998:3) says "The atmosphere, attitudes and practices of the school shall be an expression of a Christian lifestyle in harmony with the traditions, values and belief of the Mennonite community." That concern with social atmosphere must also be a big part what makes Mennonite high schools Mennonite.

Mennonites also sponsor institutions that offer educations to high school graduates. I spoke with an alumnus of one of them. She told me that bonds with old school friends can connect people for years after, even when they are living in different cities. In fact, some people's life-long social networks are established at those schools. Further, according to the same person, maybe people can feel some particular kind of instant bond with strangers they meet when those people turn out to be alumni, too. Almost all of the teachers at Mennonite schools are Mennonites (Driedger 1997:71), which must also affect the atmosphere there. Maybe some of the bonds that hold Canadian Mennonites together are formed at these schools, and some of what ties Mennonites in Winnipeg to Mennonites elsewhere runs through the schools, too, since graduates move around as much as anyone does.

The erstwhile Mennonite Brethren Bible College, lately called Concord College, and the Canadian Mennonite Bible College, are to be joining in the fall

of 2000 to form the Mennonite College Federation (MCF 2000:14). Driedger (1997:67) reports that the Canadian Mennonite Bible College (CMBC) still does, and the erstwhile Mennonite Brethren Bible College formerly did, draw students from all over Canada and beyond, so I presume the new school will, too. I think that one of the results of their merger for eventual alumni of the new school, as well as for supporters of it, will be a more unified picture of Mennonites, and one which includes more people. According to their web site (http://www.mcfed.mb.ca), the new school offers religious curricula leading to a bachelor of arts degree, and music educations leading to music degrees, as well as a few introductory arts and humanities courses. It provides on-campus dormitories (MCF 2000:14), where many social relationships are established among students (Driedger 1997:71). The new school also offers courses (http://www.mcfed.mb.ca/calendar/ courses/courses.html) teaching the German language and two course in Mennonite history, and the CMBC web site advertises three non-credit courses in Plautdietsch (http://www.mbnet.mb.ca/~cmbc/index2html).

A very different Mennonite post-secondary school is Menno Simons College, located adjacent to the University of Winnipeg campus. It will also be part of the Mennonite College Federation. According to their web page (http://wwwuwinnipeg.ca/ ~msc), undergraduate students can pursue majors in either international development studies or in conflict resolution studies (Driedger 1997:66). They offer no religious curriculum, and no courses in the social studies of Mennonites. I spoke to no one at this school, but here is a guess at what makes it Mennonite. Mennonites operate a few agencies dedicated to economic development and the promotion of peace through economic and political equality, and I will argue later in the paper how important the place of those organizations is among Mennonites. The offerings at Menno Simons College sound like the sorts of courses that people who identify strongly with those organizations might find admirable. At the very least, this school offers a kind of liberal arts education which has a particular significance in the minds of students because its curriculum can be attached meaningfully to a Mennonite label and to the expression of Mennonite values.

The only place in Winnipeg where students have any choice at all from among courses such as Mennonite history, literature, religion, or social studies, is in the Mennonite studies program at the University of Winnipeg. This program is organized by the chair of Mennonite studies at the University of Winnipeg, which is half funded by the Dr. David Friesen Foundation, and half by Canada's Multicultural Secretariat (Enns, A. 1996c:4). No one can major in Mennonite studies, but the program offers two classes each semester on Mennonite-related topics (Enns, A. 1996c:4). The Mennonite studies program web site (http://www.uwinnipeg.ca/academic/as/menn studies/menn.html) lists eight courses right now, from which those two per term are selected.

Mennonite studies courses are interesting because learning in a classroom is a good way to inform Mennonites about their history and society. Mennonites' lifestyles make them culturally little different from other Winnipeggers today (Sawatsky 1994:104), and some of the attitudes and preferences that make them different are sometimes inobvious compared, for example, to language, which would be an obvious cultural difference. Some things, such as eating perogies or going to church, need not really make Mennonites very different, but make them Mennonite nevertheless, because they can be done by Mennonites in Mennonite ways, for Mennonite reasons, tied to Mennonite traditions. Learning about the social studies of Mennonites can help highlight for people some identifiably Mennonite cultural traits, and maybe give those greater meaning by helping people understand them more fully. I think there is a certain amount of confidence that comes with knowledge about something. Religious education and the instilling of values is certainly something important for religious people, but maybe sociological and historical education gives some people a different kind of confidence about who they are and how to express it.

I think there are two important themes in the history of Mennonites in Manitoba, and both of them are key to the rest of my paper. One is that Mennonites have become about as Canadian as anyone. Cultural differences separated Mennonites from other Canadians in some significant ways in the

past, but they really no longer do. The other point to carry away from this chapter is that Mennonite Canadians also feel a certain amount of difference from other Canadians on some issues. Sometimes Mennonites are meaningfully distinct from other Canadians in Mennonite ways. The next chapter will deal with some of the diversity among Mennonites, and make the point that very few of those differences raise significant doubts in many people's minds that those are all ways of being Mennonite. This chapter had much the same theme, but on a Canadian scale. There are many ways to be constructively and proudly Canadian, and one of them is to be a Mennonite Canadian. The difference that Mennonites formally organize between themselves and other Canadians, or express through the way that they live, does not affect that in any consequential way. The transition from being Mennonites to being Mennonite Canadians has been a slow and sometimes troubling process, but it seems to have been one with a positive result. The rest of the paper will be concerned with the way that Mennonites in Winnipeg go about doing, and attributing ethnic meaning to, the parts of their lives that are different from the lives of other Canadians.

Mennoniteness, Social Reference, and Cultural Diversity

Mennonites in Winnipeg are diverse people, and individuals in Winnipeg construct their identities in different ways. Many cultural values, customs, or attitudes can mark one as Mennonite, but none of them seems to do so absolutely. This creates a certain amount of controversy among people with different ideas about Mennoniteness, but more importantly, and more interestingly, it creates quite a lot of qualitative flexibility in the way Mennoniteness can be described. As long as someone who believes themself to be a Mennonite is able to convince some other Mennonites that they are Mennonite, on terms that seem Mennonite to a certain number of other people, they can be Mennonite. I will talk a little about ancestry and religious participation in this chapter, and how opinions differ as to whether the possession of either of those two Mennonite icons is necessary for one to be a Mennonite or not. I will also refer briefly to the way a valuation of Mennonite food might relate to the Mennonite identity of some people. I already said something about the place of German and Plautdietsch in Mennonite identity in the previous chapter, so I will not discuss that ethnic icon again here. It seems clear that language is not vital to Mennoniteness in Winnipeg today. In addition to the discussions surrounding matters of iconicity, there is further discussion among Mennonites of the values and attitudes that Mennonites should have. Mennonites have very different views on a variety of social and political issues. That need not affect the circumstance that they believe themselves to be Mennonite, but it does affect their identity as Mennonites, and the character of Mennoniteness in general. There is one other kind of important social reference through which Mennoniteness is formed. Mennonite identity is related to other identities in different ways. Mennonites in Winnipeg relate their Mennoniteness to various others through relationships of exclusion and inclusion in different ways in the act of defining for themselves who they are. Sometimes they are part of a global Mennonite ecumene, and sometimes they are not, and sometimes they are Canadian, for example, and in some matters,

they are not. These ideas are all part of Mennoniteness, and build up to form who Mennonites, the people, believe they are.

Mennoniteness in Winnipeg in Reference to Others

In addition to ethnic identities, some things that can affect our personal identities are religious identities, local identities, and national identities, which also connect us to some people and separate us from others. Each of those identities is also a cultural construction, and they relate to ethnic identity in different ways. I will spend some time discussing the way in which Winnipeg Mennonites see themselves related to, or different from, Mennonites elsewhere. Those relationships with other Mennonites also say something about the meaning of Mennoniteness in Winnipeg. Mennonite ethnic identity is also related to other ethnic identities in different ways, and I will discuss that a little, too. As I mentioned in the methodology section, Mennonites in Winnipeg do not live in social or cultural isolation. I will argue that there are differences which make Winnipeg Mennonites unique, but at the same time, the ethnic identity of Mennonite Winnipeggers is closely tied to their simultaneous identities as Canadians, and as integral parts of other imagined communities, too. Local Mennonite identities are constructed in reference to the lives of those other people in some important ways.

Why Winnipeg Mennonites are Unique

There are some good reasons to think that Mennonites in Winnipeg today are different from Mennonites living in other locations. Their full and easy participation in Canadian and North American Mennonite institutions (Redekop, J. 1994) clearly demonstrates that they are not very different. Indeed, their lifestyles and values make them mostly similar to many other Mennonites (Kraus 1990:32). Just the same, certain characteristics and circumstances distinguish them from Mennonites elsewhere.

Maybe the most notable difference between Winnipeg and other Mennonite centres is the size of the city itself, and the portion of that population that Mennonites compose. The highest concentration of Mennonites living in

any city in the world live in Winnipeg (Driedger 1990:vii). About half of the Mennonites on the Canadian prairies remain quite rural, living on farms or in small towns (Kauffman and Driedger 1991:54), but Mennonites in Winnipeg live in a big city. According to the 1991 census (Stats Can 1993:300), 645 610 people live in Winnipeg, and as I will explain in the section entitled 'Who is a Mennonite?,' it seems reasonable to guess that something over 20 000 Mennonites live there. The second biggest urban Mennonite populations in Canada, maybe half as big as Winnipeg's, live in Vancouver and in Kitchener / Waterloo (Driedger 1990:87). Because of the relatively large number of Mennonites living in Winnipeg, they are often able to muster the human and other resources necessary to organize activities of a magnitude that Mennonites elsewhere cannot manage quite as well (Driedger 1988a:84). This affords them a certain amount of freedom, since they are able to organize their own affairs, separate from Winnipeggers more generally, in certain matters. Some examples that I describe in this paper are schools, and the Crosstown Credit Union. A couple of other big-budget, participation-intensive examples that I will not describe are the Mennonite Community Orchestra (Klassen, B. 1993) and Bethania Personal Care Home (Wiebe *et al* 1996). It takes a good many Mennonites to keep projects like those going, and there are enough Mennonites in Winnipeg to do it.

It is useful to think about the differences between Mennonites in Winnipeg and those in the predominantly Mennonite towns and villages, such as Steinbach or Plum Coulee, which are located nearby. Certainly Mennonites from the country and the city cooperate in common interests (Enns, A. 1996a:1; Hiebert, I. 1997:1), and maybe I will list more similarities here than differences, but the differences are interesting, too. For some people, the difference is considerable, and for others, nearly negligible, which matches the sort of cultural variation Appadurai (1996:33) suggests commonly characterizes geographically dispersed people who nevertheless believe themselves united. Someone I spoke with in Steinbach suggested that a big difference between that town and Winnipeg was that in Steinbach, it is possible to negotiate a bank loan and buy a car, then go out for lunch, all the while speaking only

Plautdietsch, but in Winnipeg, one would have to speak English.[1] The point of the anecdote is to suggest that the people living in the cosmopolitan city have to make more and greater cultural compromises in order to live comfortably together. The residents of the more homogeneously populated small towns are freer to set their own cultural agendas, and to make more assumptions about the kinds of knowledge they are likely to share with their neighbours, and how some things are likely to be understood.[2] Another example of the difference between rural and urban Manitoba Mennonites comes from a letter to the editor of the *Mennonite Reporter* (Rempel-Burkholder 1997:7) in which a man attempting to describe what he thought would be a desirable Mennonite identity expressed his distaste for the "platz and vereneki[3] culture of Steinbach." Whether appropriately or not, he associated Mennonite identity in Steinbach with Mennonite food, and maybe thereby indirectly with some other Mennonite cultural traditions. No matter whether there are in fact widely shared cultural habits in Mennonite towns that make people there different from city Mennonites, or if those differences are mostly limited to the letter writer's cultural stereotype, the sort of idea expressed in the published letter must affect the way city Mennonites imagine small town Mennonites to be. Kauffman and Driedger (1991:235) found that Mennonites in rural North America were generally more conservative in their social attitudes and values than urbanites, and a *Mennonite Reporter* survey (Enns, A. 1996d:2) that I will describe near the end of this chapter found differences in attitude along the same lines.

While that is so, Winnipeg Mennonites in Mennonite social situations also embrace a great deal of traditional Mennonite culture. Contrary to the way the writer of the letter to the editor (Rempel-Burkholder 1997:7) described things, the popularity of Mennonite food is not limited to Steinbach, and nor is its

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[1] Of course nearly everyone in Steinbach speaks English nearly all of the time. That is not the point.

[2] Maybe Mennonite habitus is more generally and more homogeneously shared in rural communities as well. If it is, that would surely affect city Mennonites' conception of their cultural place in society more than the rural Mennonites who might only be reminded that they were different from some other Canadians in their interactions with non-Mennonites

[3] *Platz* is a kind of fruitcake, and *vereneki* are perogies. Either the author or the editor has referred to *Platz* in German and *vereneki* in Ukrainian, here. Those foods are also commonly referred to in Plautdietsch, but that language has no standard orthography. Jack Thiessen (1977) suggests *Plautz* and *Wrennetje* in his *Mennonite Low-German Dictionary*.

role as an icon of Mennoniteness. Nineteen hundred people at the 1998 MCC relief sale[4] at The Forks, in downtown Winnipeg, ate the farmer sausage,[5] *plautz*, and *wrennitje* available there, along with the pancakes for breakfast and the marinated green peppers at supper, with at least a little enthusiasm (Can. M. 1998:16). Amazingly, although the whole thing was clearly advertised as a Mennonite event (MCC 1998), an organizer of that sale wondered aloud to me if they might not have done better serving some other kind of food, in case the Mennonite food made non-Mennonites who might attend uncomfortable. If that statement meant nothing else, it surely meant that speaker ascribed powerful Mennonite iconicity to the food at the sale. Many among the older generation who attended the sale were speaking Plautdietsch, and a couple of people were conversing in German, so linguistic Mennonite ethnic icons are not limited to the country, either.[6] Certainly there is more to Mennonite culture than language and cuisine, and certainly there has always been more to Mennonite ethnic identity than that, but those long-standing ethnic icons, at least, were readily apparent in Winnipeg that day. Similarly, Jim Coggins (1997b:10) makes special mention, in an *MB Herald* article on quite another topic, that they had had borscht, another traditional Mennonite food, for lunch at the Manitoba Mennonite Brethren Conference meeting in March of 1997. Other suggestions of the continuing relevance of Mennonite cultural traditions in Winnipeg are the popularity, at least in some circles, of the musical group Heischraitje + Willa Honich, who sing folk songs partly in Plautdietsch (Heinrichs, E. 1997:13), and of Plautdietsch literature and theater (Penner 2000:39). I will discuss later that

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[4] MCC sales are like a combination family picnic, garage sale, culture festival, charity auction, talent show, arts and crafts display, fund-raiser, and educational event. MCC stages them to raise funds, but people attend for many reasons (Regehr, 1996:77)

[5] As well as in its regular form, farmer sausage was also sold as burgers from a booth marked 'Fast Food.' No matter what the origin of the addition of barbecuing, buns, and relish might be, there seems little doubt to me that the sausage burgers were popularly thought of as a Mennonite food, and they belonged there as much as the *Wrennitje* and *Schmauntfat* (a kind of gravy) did. A much smaller sign under the one that read 'Fast Food' said 'Graute Jasch,' the Plautdietsch name of sausage burgers. A regular attender of those annual sales told me that it was only the first or second year that the Plautdietsch sign had been so small, and that there had been any English sign there at all, although the signs everywhere else had already been written in English for some unknown number of years, or might even always have been in English.

[6] I heard elderly people speaking Plautdietsch in Winnipeg Safeways a couple of times, too, so, at least among the elderly, Mennonite languages need not even be limited to Mennonite locations in Winnipeg.

no matter how popular some aspects of Mennonite traditional culture might be in certain contexts, overt behaviour clearly distinguishes most Mennonites from other Winnipeggers in only a few ways. At the same time, it is some of those very differences from others in Winnipeg that make Mennonites there similar to Mennonites elsewhere, because shared ethnic icons help support feelings of solidarity (Barth 1969a:11, 13).

Part of their heritage also separates Winnipeg Mennonites from some other Mennonites who also have ethnically Mennonite ancestors. The historical experience of Mennonites in Manitoba, and in Winnipeg, partly distinguishes them from Russian Mennonites elsewhere in Canada. Frank Epp (1982:214, 259, 352, 361,421) often addresses the separate local economic, environmental, and political issues of each region, and local Mennonites' responses to those issues, in separate sections of his book *Mennonites in Canada, 1920-1940*. Epp is describing events that took place long ago, though, and Kraus (1990:32) says Mennonites in Canada now face many of the same challenges, and address them mostly in the same ways. Manitoba Mennonites today maintain provincial church organizations (Regehr 1996:181), and the Mennonite Central Committee keeps provincial offices in each of Ontario and the four western provinces as well (MCC n.d. b). Those bodies are integrated on higher levels, though (Epp, F. 1983:21; Regehr 1996:317), and the provincial organizations exist mostly just to address particular local concerns, not to act as advocates in matters of broader concern (Enns, A. 1997a:6). Local factors do create differences among Mennonites in Canada, but those are not, for the most part, very great.

The historical and cultural gaps that distinguish the Dutch-Russian Mennonites in Manitoba from the Swiss Mennonites in Ontario are more important. In religious matters, members of the two groups can be more alike than dissimilar, since their previously separate religious organizations (Epp, F. 1983:15) have merged (Rempel, R. 1998:2). An article in the *Canadian Mennonite* (Rempel, R. 1998:2), written just before the merger of the (mostly Russian) General Conference Mennonite Church and the (mostly Swiss) Mennonite Church, said their main religious difference then related to the way

authority was organized within the church, although Abe Dueck (1995:71) mentions some theological differences, as well. Differences more relevant to my paper stem primarily from historical experiences (Sawatsky 1991:114). The migration of about 2000 Swiss Mennonites to Upper Canada as United Empire Loyalists began in 1786 and ended by 1825 (Epp, F. 1974:50). Those people had previously formed a small part of the Pennsylvania German cultural and ethnic population in the erstwhile Thirteen Colonies, and being Mennonite had not made them very different from others there (Nolt 1999:493). When they arrived in Canada, they had relatively open attitudes toward the crown and their new Canadian neighbours (Epp, F. 1974:55). Mennonites first moved from Russia to Manitoba much more recently, beginning in 1874 (Ens, Adolf 1994a:81), and the latest major migration along that route ended as recently as 1951 (Regehr 1996:79), although a trickling immigration has continued from Latin America to both Ontario and Manitoba over the years (Brandt, C. 1992:13; Heinrichs, M. 1996:12). Swiss and Russian Mennonites were culturally quite different when they arrived (Nolt 1999:493; Urry 1994:46), and the hundred year difference between the durations of their respective stays in Canada have had an effect on contemporaries' experiences here. Significantly, while arrival and acculturation in Canada is a matter that might be reported on in history books for Swiss Mennonites in Ontario, it is the stuff of the lives of many the Manitoba Mennonites' parents and grandparents. Although Swiss and Russian Mennonites in Canada cooperate quite fully in many institutions, Sawatsky (1991:114) points out that some people suppose Swiss Mennonites are not commonly conscious of any Mennonite ethnic identity at all.

Multiple Ethnic Identities

Being an ethnic Mennonite does not limit one to being Mennonite only. People can live out two or more ethnic identities at once, or switch contextually between them, maybe as long as there is no profound conflict between their identities (Nagata 1974:333). Mennonites can establish different kinds of ethnic bonds in different ways, and they do. The most obvious example of this must be that most Canadian Mennonites believe themselves to be Canadians

(Sawatsky 1994:104). Although the dichotomous character of ethnic identity also opposes Mennonites to other Canadians in some ways, Canadian Mennonites are Canadians in many others. Canadian is an ethnic identity, too, of course, and combines just as well with others as any ethnic identity does (Kalbach and Kalbach 1999:11). One of the ways to be, or become, a good Canadian today is to be a Canadian Mennonite, and Canadians who are Mennonites can be so without feeling at all less Canadian than anyone else. McCormack (1997:112) reports that Mennonites have been popularly thought of as good Canadians since the 1960s. The label 'Canadian Mennonite' is ubiquitous in Mennonite contexts (Rempel, R. 1998; Janzen, W. 1996; Schrag, P. 1997a; Regehr 1996; and there is a newspaper called *The Canadian Mennonite*). Another reason to conclude that many Mennonites believe themselves to be Canadians is that Mennonite institutions such as the Mennonite Central Committee (Driedger and Kraybill 1994:185), Mennonite schools (Stoesz, C. 1998:16), and homes for the elderly (Heinrichs, K. 1997:16), take government funds as a part of their necessary operating budget, and others, including the Crosstown Credit Union, tolerate or even welcome government regulation (Dyck, J. 1993:122). Lastly, I found evidence of Mennonite integration in Canada in a 1996 phone survey which asked both Mennonites and non-Mennonites in Manitoba questions about Christian faith and social issues such as justice and community. Although the newspaper report I read about the survey results was summary, it reported that the views of thirty-three percent of non-Mennonites overlapped significantly with the views of Mennonites, and that eighty percent of non-Mennonites agreed with Mennonites that believing in God was important, people should volunteer, foreign aid works, war is always wrong, and that helping inner city youth reduces crime (Enns, A. 1996d:2). Only one Mennonite in Winnipeg told me, when I asked them about this, that they did not believe Mennonites were Canadians.

Different ethnic Mennonite communities abroad can fit, at different times, or simultaneously, into both the dichotomous 'them' category and the 'us' category, as those are created by Canadian Mennonites. Among the

Mennonites abroad, those most similar to Canadian Mennonites are the ones in the United States. On one level, the same obscure and profoundly meaningful things that differentiate Canadians from Americans (Keohane 1997:32; Gwyn 1995:49) also differentiate Canadian Mennonites from American ones, classifying American Mennonites as 'them.' Those more general Canadian-American issues are not my topic here, but they are just as often insignificant as substantial. Regarding Mennonites in particular, Sam Steiner (1998:12-13) supposes that the controversial division at the forty-ninth parallel centres partly on the differing relationships that Mennonites have with their respective national governments, and with the cultural values of the general populace in the two countries. These differences give Mennonites in the two countries slightly different priorities relating to issues such as military participation and international economics, as well as different attitudes about what projects it is reasonable for Mennonites to attempt. Steiner (1998:13) suggests American Mennonites are more assertive, and more likely to take an anti-government attitude. Steiner's description matches Appadurai's (1996:146) argument that ethnicities are generally mobilized in relation to the activities of the nation-state. It should be no surprise that Mennonite identity is different in Canada and the United States, then, since identity among those two sets of Mennonites is being constructed in different political environments.

Rodney Sawatsky (1994:89) suggests Canadian Mennonites are generally more sensitive about their differences with American Mennonites than vice versa. Margaret Reimer Loewen (1997a:6) supplies a couple of examples of that. She complains that American Mennonites, "while wary of identifying themselves as such," seem to have been trying to present apparently American concerns as general issues at international meetings. While Canadians were noticing such differences, Americans were not. Loewen (1997a:7) goes on in the same article to report that "Canadian youth felt put off when a Mennonite Central Committee drama troupe chanted 'I am an American' " as a part of their performance.[7]

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[7] I wonder if the Canadian youths felt put off because the Americans were proud to be American, or if it was because they were expressing that pride in an international Mennonite context, instead of in an American, or American Mennonite context.

While American Mennonites are an important other to Canadian Mennonites in some situations, the two also form a single North American imagined community in some ways. For example, academic writers combine them and compare them to religious Mennonites in Zaire (Redekop, J. 1987:66), ethnic Mennonites in Mexico (Brandt, C. 1992:267), or all of the Mennonites in the whole rest of the world (Shenk 1996:7), suggesting that North American Mennonites are sometimes a unit somehow unto themselves. Regehr (1996:432-433) lists ten Mennonite periodicals that have North American, as opposed to Canadian, American, or International circulations, suggesting readers and publishers of those journals imagine a North American Mennonite community, too. North American Mennonites are also united in their support of the MCC, which is a North American-based institution with a Canadian subdivision (Epp, F. 1983:21), Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA 1997a) and many other Mennonite organizations (Miller 1994:139).

Ethnic Mennonites elsewhere in the world seem to weave in and out of the 'us' category of Canadian Mennonite identity in a similar way. Evidence of Canadian Mennonite social cooperation with Russian Mennonites elsewhere in the world is much more difficult to find than records of Canadian-American cooperation, so maybe Mennonites in Latin America, the former Soviet Union, and Germany more often play a 'them' than an 'us' role. Carsten Brandt (1992:267) supposes that the most important outside cultural influence on Mennonites in northern Mexico, especially regarding religious ideas, comes not from northern Mexicans, but from Mennonites in Canada and the United States. Also, their most likely source of loan words for technological innovations is English, not Spanish (Brandt, C. 1992:272). *Die Mennonitische Post* gives quite a lot of page space to Mennonites in Mexico and South America. Someone in their office told me there are only 128 *Post* subscribers in Winnipeg, but Brandt (1992:19) describes it as popular reading in Mexico. On that level at least, Mennonites in Mexico and Canada are continuously connected to one another as participants in the same ethnic category.

Rudy Wiebe's novel *The Blue Mountains of China* (1970) describes the departure from Russia of a few acquainted or related people, and how their own

and their children's lives in Paraguay and Canada repeatedly intersect. Characters grow to have different attitudes about Mennoniteness, and different ways of expressing it, and although a couple of characters come to question their own Mennoniteness (Wiebe, R. 1970:189, 193), Wiebe never seems to doubt who they are. Readers might conclude from reading this novel that all of those culturally diverse characters represent ways of being Mennonite. The changes in the characters lives and attitudes are similarly explorations of Mennoniteness. Wiebe's work is fictional, but if Anderson (1983:36) is right about the influence of novels in creating imagined communities, it could have as big an influence on Mennonite identity as any textbook or newspaper.

An article in the *Mennonite Historian* (Klassen, J. 1994:1) stating that 56 000 Mennonites had moved from the Soviet Union to Germany between 1970 and 1991 suggests that some Mennonites in Canada take an interest in those people, as well. *Der Bote* describes a little of the lives of Mennonites presently living in the erstwhile Soviet Union (Spencer 2000:9) and of the post-Soviet Mennonites in Germany (Ehlers 2000:7; Ens, A. 2000:7). Something that might suggest that there is a sense of solidarity among ethnic Mennonites in Canada and the Ukraine is an article (Zuercher 1998a:13) about school books and financial and medical aid that was sent, along with technical assistance, from Canada to the Mennonite Ukraine. Mennonites send much the same sort of aid to people in many places, but reports of those donations seem more often to involve broader, maybe more diachronic, descriptions of political, economic, and cultural circumstances and the place that aid has been sent (Longhurst 1998:5; Beach 2000:12; Thiessen and Martin 1999:12). Simple notices that something has been sent, received, and appreciated seem to me to be rare newspaper articles. Maybe this event had some special significance because the aid was going to Mennonites.

German ethnicity is an aspect of Mennonite identity for some people, as well. It is unclear exactly what "German ethnic origin," meant for all of these people, but of the 207 970 Canadians who claimed the Mennonite religion in the 1991 Canadian census (Stats Can 1993:10), 102 430, almost half, also claimed to have a German origin (Stats Can 1993:203). I can only guess what

makes them think they are somehow German, but clearly they do. A bibliography of publications on ethnicity in Canada (Gregorovich 1993) makes Mennonites a subcategory in the chapter on German Canadians, so I guess some others also believe Mennonites are German. Similarly, a history of Germans in Canada (Lehmann 1986) treats Mennonites as Germans with a particular religion, giving them their own chapters, but clearly categorizing them as German Canadians. Another thing that suggests some Mennonites are German is an article in *Die Mennonitische Rundschau* (*M. Rundschau* 1995:30) which referred to Mennonites in Mexico as Germans to distinguish them from Mexicans. In a newspaper article, John Longhurst (1996b:9) also once mentions a Germanic Mennonite culture, although he does not define that further.

Religious Mennonites Abroad

In addition to ethnic Mennonites around the world, there are many people who value some version of a Mennonite religion, but not any version of Mennonite ethnicity. They are also connected to Mennonite identity in Winnipeg today, and play a part in defining it, through religious identity (Redekop, J. 1987:16). Some of these are descendants of Anabaptists, just as Mennonites in Manitoba are. Unlike the world-travelling Mennonites who have ended up in Winnipeg, though, those people's ancestors have continued living in the Netherlands (Voolstra 1991:277), Germany (Schowalter 1967:21), or Switzerland (Gerber 1967:14) for the last four and a half centuries. Amish people are also descendants of Anabaptists, but there is some question among both Mennonites and Amish as to whether Amish people are Mennonite or not (Kloss 1986:119; Roth, L. 1996:1). Religious identity also ties Mennonites in Winnipeg to Mennonite missionary converts in many places around the globe. Those religious bonds are meaningful and important to Mennonites, but different than ethnic bonds (Redekop, J. 1987:66).

In many respects, Mennonite is an ill-defined category in Winnipeg these days. This surely has something to do with Mennonite integration with broader Canadian society, and with all kinds of diversity among Mennonites themselves,

but maybe it is also partly because Mennonite has long been difficult to define. No single original homeland centres the Mennonite world, and there have always been big cultural differences between Mennonites living in different places. In fact, Mennonites in the Netherlands, Danzig, Russia, and North America stayed in contact with one another over the centuries without the people in one location ever becoming particularly culturally influential on the others (Myovich 1996:230; Urry 1989:41, 155; Ens, Adolf 1994a:24). Even the incongruity of Mennonite religious and ethnic populations, which I will discuss more in just a few pages, is not only the result of post-war proselytic efforts. Mennonite Brethren (MB) churches in Russia had been sending missionaries to India and the Dutch East Indies in the late nineteenth century, to broad approval and interest at home (Urry 1989:270), as had MBs in Canada before 1918 (Brandt, S. 1997:13). Although the flow of information about Mennonites elsewhere arrives more quickly and includes a lot more now than it did in the past, the boundaries that separated Mennonites from non-Mennonites, and the ties that held Mennonites together, have long been culturally and socially indistinct. Certainly modern Mennonite plurality is different from Mennonite plurality in the past, but the ongoing awareness that diverse Mennonites in many places have been keeping of one another suggests that Mennonite plurality is also something with an established past.

Mennonites among Canadian Christians

Mennonites keep ties to Christians of all sorts all over Canada and around the globe (Redekop, J. 1994; Miller 1994), and this affects their identity, too. For example, Canadian Mennonites now cooperate with the Friends (Quakers) in addressing the government on peace issues, although not typically in other matters (Driedger and Kraybill 1994:70). Mennonite religion is an iconic part of Mennoniteness, but in order for it to be that, it must be different from other kinds of Christianity, and Mennonites must know how it is different. Interactions with other Christian organizations give Mennonites a reference to which to compare their own distinctive version of Christianity, and it also keeps them knowledgeable about their similarities with other Christians (Redekop, J.

1994:125). The Mennonite news media is instrumental in connecting Christian Mennonites with Christians elsewhere. The *Mennonite Reporter* had sections every issue called National News and International News about non-Mennonite Christianity, the *Canadian Mennonite* addresses The Wider Church every issue, and the *Mennonite Brethren Herald* has a section called People and Events, where short articles about non-Mennonite Christians are printed. Non-Mennonites also notice a Mennonite presence in Canadian Christian circles. For example, Brian Stiller (1998:9), an American, wrote an article in the *Canadian Mennonite* claiming that vocal, socially leftwing Mennonites have been important in keeping any conservative Christian right from gaining much influence in Canada. John Redekop (1994:125) concludes that Mennonite involvement with other Canadian religious organizations gives their ideas greater legitimacy with other Christians, and it helps Mennonites understand themselves better, too.

Those are some of the ways in which Winnipeg Mennonites fit onto the human landscape of other Mennonites, Canadians, and people of the world as an interactive whole. That discussion was very broad, and said nothing about how or why Mennoniteness ... particular individuals in particular circumstances.

Who is a Mennonite?

In this section, I will try to describe how some of the people who fit under the Mennonite label fit there. Ethnicity is a kind of social relationship which is always related to an understanding of the special meaning that people participating in those relationships attribute to some aspects of their culture. Two icons that people are most likely to associate most strongly with Mennoniteness are ancestry and religious participation. I will explore some of the more inclusive and exclusive ways Mennonites relate those two to Mennonite ethnicity, and I will look at some of the ethnic bonds and discontinuities they represent. Mennonites are not consistent among themselves in their various identities. Some conceptions of Mennoniteness actually seem to conflict with others, so that they could not be valid according to the terms of the other, despite that they coexist. That being the case, attempting

to compose a detailed denotative description of an ethnic identity, or even a summary characterization of it, is invariably a dubious undertaking, and one which could never be completed accurately. My description of Mennonites is mostly connotative, which means it will not positively define Mennonite identity at all, but it does describe some of the ideas that can be part of Mennonite identity, and some of what Mennonite identity can imply.

I encountered a particular technique for counting Mennonites a couple of times while I was researching this paper. I found the patrilineal conception of Mennoniteness on which it is based interesting, so I will digress here a little. In a fine little book prepared for a general reading audience, Leo Driedger (1990:63) attempts to estimate the number of Mennonites enrolled at the University of Manitoba, and the number of Mennonites on faculty, by counting the number of Mennonite names among students and professors. An administrator at a Mennonite nursing home and I spent ten minutes making a similar attempt one day, looking at the list of residents at the home. I was amazed at how well she knew the people in the whole home. The conversation we had while we tried to sort the Mennonites out included some exchanges that could be summarized, maybe a little dramatically, like this:

Paul: "Is this a Mennonite name?"

Administrator: "No, that's a Ukrainian name, but she's a Mennonite. She married a Ukrainian, and so she's got that name."

Paul: "Oh, I see. That makes things complicated. What about Brandt? Is that a Mennonite name? I think it is."

Administrator: "You know, it sometimes is, but I think that man is German. He just stays here because so many of our staff speak German. This place is good for people like him, too. Some of the Brandts around here are Mennonite, but some are German. I guess it's difficult to know, just from the names"

Paul: "Yeah. I guess so. What about Grabke? Is that name Mennonite?"

Administrator: "You know, I'm not even sure. I think she's been going to Bible study, so maybe it is."

On the same topic, Regehr (1996:170) notes that some Mennonites changed their names when they moved to the city, from Janz to Jones, for example, so this matter of name-counting does not really seem very useful.

Maybe it will be useful to discuss some other ways of identifying Mennonites. In 1990, there were 9350 members of forty-seven Mennonite churches in Winnipeg (Driedger 1990:vii). Since Mennonite ethnicity focuses on religion now, and since the church is the most important institution among Mennonites (Kraus 1990:32), counting church members as if that were counting Mennonites might not seem entirely unreasonable. Indeed, for two writers of a letter to the editor of the *Mennonite Reporter* (Wiebe and Wiebe 1997:7), it is clear that one could not be a Mennonite if one is not a Christian. That statistic, though, is nearly exclusively counting people who value tenets of the Mennonite religion, which might not be all that accurate a count of ethnic Mennonites. John Redekop (1987:16) maintains that one need not value Mennonite ethnicity in order to value Mennonite religion, and Rodney Sawatsky (1991:115) points out that it is possible to be an ethnic Mennonite without being a member of a Mennonite church.

This category, Mennonite church members in Winnipeg, includes entire congregations of people who are Chinese, Franco-Manitoban, Hispanic (Driedger 1990:89), and Vietnamese (Ens, Anna 1996:196). There is extremely little in any of the literature about these people, and I did not speak to anyone from any of these churches, so cannot write confidently here. I did not speak to them because I was afraid to raise the issue of people feeling welcome or excluded, in case it was sensitive. Judging from what Vogt (1988:308) says about some church Mennonites being dogmatically narrow-minded, or Peter Hamm's (1987:42) comment that there has been no history of Mennonites perceiving tolerance as a virtue, I guessed it might be. John Longhurst (1996b:9), writing about similar churches in the United States, quotes Loyal Funk as saying members of those churches find Mennonite religious values attractive, but not so the part of the word Mennonite which "conjures up a Germanic background that just doesn't suit them." I have no doubt that every public use of the label Mennonite affects the ethnic identity of Mennonites in

Manitoba in some significant ways, since the perception of Mennonites by others is also an aspect of their ethnic identity. I will show in a little while that Mennonite ethnicity affects converts' perception of their religion and themselves in some meaningful ways, too. Also, as John Redekop (1987:16) has pointed out, many people who value Mennonite theology do not value Mennonite ethnicity,[8] so I cannot suppose that questions about ethnicity need have any bearing on religious conviction at all. Since my paper is about identity, and the terms on which it exists, though, the ethnic identities of people at these churches are relevant.

The churches might stay separate for linguistic reasons, but Loyal Funk's comments just above (Longhurst 1996b:9), as well as the attitude that Anna Ens (1996:194, 196) takes in describing these churches' almost incidental-sounding affiliation with Mennonite church organizations, make me doubt that is the main reason. Millett (1983:273) suggests that forming their own churches and affiliating them with existing religious organizations can be a good way for members of ethnic minorities to integrate into Canadian society without having to make the social and cultural compromises that joining existing churches might entail. If that were a goal of some of the people at these ethnically separate Mennonite churches in Winnipeg, it would be reasonable to presume that Mennonite religious activities play a different part in their lives, and have a different meaning for them, than they do for ethnic Mennonites. I did not ask anyone, though, so I do not know. If those people are, or become, ethnic Mennonites in their own hearts or minds, and demonstrate that to others, then they are ethnic Mennonites, of course.

Here are some other accounts, in different contexts, suggesting that religion alone, no matter how sincere, could only doubtfully demonstrate one's Mennonite ethnicity in some people's minds. Two of the three church ministers I spoke with during my visit to Winnipeg told me that there were some number of members of their congregations who had no Mennonite ancestors, and had not

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[8] Valuing ethnicity or theology is very different from being affected by them, or being aware of them. This will come up again.

been raised in a Mennonite environment.[9] If that pattern can be extended to all of the Mennonite churches in Winnipeg, then this topic is relevant to a considerable number of people in Winnipeg. Frederick Ross (1988:269), for example, was not raised in a Mennonite family, but says he has "become enamoured with the Mennonite people themselves - their culture, traditions, and ways", and that he has "put [his] foot firmly across any ethno-cultural barriers that might exist and [has] identified strongly with Mennonites, coming to love them dearly ..." He reports that even so, some Mennonites, even some who are enthusiastically proselytic, do not recognize him as really belonging, because of the cultural and linguistic knowledge he lacks (Ross 1988:271). Similarly, Anna Ens (1996:148) reports that a Winnipegger named Costas Yphantides felt very good about Mennonite religious aims, and felt right at home in his local congregation. On the other hand, he felt locked out by Mennonite culture, and thought that Mennonites outside his own congregation did not respect him, because he had not been born a Mennonite. Based on that statement, it seems reasonable to conclude that some people believe Mennonite ethnicity to be primordial, and that they suppose church membership is not enough to make one a Mennonite. As with Ross's cultural problem, some of the Mennonites Yphantides has been meeting are looking for icons additional to religion before they are willing to ascribe Mennoniteness. Maybe they do not recognize his habitus as Mennonite, and surmise therefore that he must not be one.

John Redekop (1987:82) cites the experiences of a few non-Mennonites who joined Mennonite churches, but he doesn't say where those churches are. I think these things could be said in Winnipeg, so I copied two of those quotations down here. Speaking about Mennonite ethnicity and leaving a Mennonite church because they felt excluded there because of it, one person said, "It isn't a spoken thing and it's difficult to put your finger on, but it's strong. I mean it's STRONG! We felt the ethnic bond often took the place of oneness in the body of Christ. This was one of the reasons we left." I think that in that case, no one, including the speaker, was ascribing Mennonite identity to the speaker.

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[9] One of them guessed that about twenty percent of the members of their church fit that description.

This next person also seems not to want to be an ethnic Mennonite, but the ethnic difference does not seem to be such a source of tension: "These people do have a strong ethnic background, and I'm not part of that. But that's no problem. I do not go there because of ethnic culture." By citing these anecdotes, I do not mean to imply that people are unable to move comfortably into Mennonite communities or to participate in Mennonite religious activities. In fact, I think those four examples suggest that they are. What they also suggest, though, is that ethnic identity has some other meaning for many Mennonites than only participating in Mennonite religious institutions.

There seem to be different opinions on the matter of being born Mennonite, and remaining that way, too. I met someone in the summer of 1998 who was working at a Mennonite institution. She was very enthusiastic about being a Mennonite. Just the same, she called herself a 'Mennonite-by-choice', and her co-workers called her that, too. That was ascription by everyone, but it was ascription to a particular kind of Mennonite identity, because those people thought 'real' Mennonites are born, although others can become basically Mennonite. Whereas that woman and her friends attributed 'real' Mennoniteness to birth, others have been unwilling to attribute Mennoniteness, despite birth, as the example of Di Brandt just below demonstrates. First let me reiterate my opinion that ethnicity is learned, and no one is ever born with it. People's perceptions may well nevertheless include the possibility that one could possess primordial ethnicity, and this belief could become a meaningful aspect of ethnic identity for those people (Appadurai 1996:139; Herzfeld 1986:402). Frank Epp (1982:533) represents the distinction between ancestry, ethnicity, and culture insightfully when he calls Paul Hiebert, the author of *Sarah Binks* (1947), someone "of Mennonite background." Without ever suggesting Hiebert was a Mennonite, Epp argues that his was a pioneering effort in translating Mennonite culture, in this case the Mennonite sense of humour, into English, in such a way that it could be appreciated by a broad Canadian audience. In this way Epp suggests that Hiebert could be not only born of Mennonite parents, but culturally Mennonite in some important way, and still not be an ethnic Mennonite.

Many Mennonites also believe they are Mennonites, despite that they do not formally participate in Mennonite churches. The Canadian census of 1991 (Stats Can 1993:100), showed that 21 900 Winnipeggers stated that their religion was Mennonite. That suggests there are many more people than the 9350 church members (Driedger 1990:vii) in Winnipeg who believe they have associations as Mennonites somehow, although they have no formal status as church members. The same census reported that 4500 Mennonites younger than fifteen lived in Winnipeg (Stats Can 1993:100). Unbaptized children are not counted as members of Mennonite churches (Neufeld 1989:212). I have found no average age of baptism, but if I guess it falls some time in the high school years, then there might be as many as 5000 young Winnipeg Mennonites counted in that census who were not church members, but who will be baptized when they grow up. That still leaves about 7500 Winnipeggers claiming the Mennonite religion without having church membership. Since Mennoniteness itself is such a very uncertain thing, questions about the precision of my calculations really fall beside the point. More generally, though, the disparity between the numbers gives me a reason to wonder who those 7500 people are.

Ross McCormack (1997:112) expresses the belief that there are many people who call themselves Mennonites and who "practice the group's aesthetic cultural forms," but who do not participate in Mennonite institutions. Presuming that some of those people filled in 'Mennonite' at the religion blank on their census forms would explain a fair bit of the disparity between the census number and the church membership total. Not going to church and not valuing religious ideas are two quite different things, and some people might be religiously Mennonite, but not belong to any church. Also, 'Mennonite' was not an option in the 'ethnic origin' section of that census, and non-church members who marked 'Mennonite' at the religion question on their census forms might have been conflating ethnicity with religion, but I can present nothing which supports that suggestion. Nevertheless, it is also not unreasonable to interpret those people's census forms as signs that they might ascribe some sort of Mennonite ethnic identity to themselves.

I encountered a record of only a few non-Christians who publicly claimed to be Mennonites. For example, on October 9, 1985, Patrick Friesen said he was a Mennonite but not a Christian - a secular Mennonite. He thereby became, according to Rodney Sawatsky (1991:115), a "prize villain" in many Mennonite minds. In a very similar case, two writers of a letter to the editor of the *Mennonite Reporter* (Wiebe and Wiebe 1997:7) take offence that Di Brandt, whom they say is "not a regular Mennonite Christian," was nevertheless described as a Mennonite writer in a review (Loewen, M. 1997b:8) of her book which was published in the *Mennonite Reporter*. It seems to me that the book reviewer (Loewen, M. 1997b:8) was ascribing Mennoniteness to Brandt without qualification, and in her reply to the letter to the editor, Brandt (1997:7) was relating her feeling of Mennoniteness to her appreciation of her "powerful and in many ways rich ... heritage." The letter-writers, on the other hand, seem not to have believed Brandt to be a Mennonite at all, because she did not fit the kind of Christian meaning they were giving that word.

Sandra Birdsell's relationship to the Mennonites seems in some ways to be the inverse of Friesen's and Brandt's experiences. Birdsell, whose mother was a Mennonite (Tiessen 1988:246), has written a little about Mennonites, including one fictional character's lament that "Being Mennonite was like having acne. It was shameful, dreary. No one invited you out" (Birdsell 1982:131). Birdsell's writing about Mennonites takes the stance of an outsider, and she claims to have abandoned the Mennonite community years ago, but to her own surprise, continues to be embraced by Mennonites as a Mennonite writer (Tiessen 1982:246). Maybe Birdsell's reception among Mennonites would be different if she claimed to be Mennonite, but it seems that Mennonites can ascribe Mennoniteness inconsistently when that suits them.

I read an article about a non-religious gathering of Mennonites, gathering because they were Mennonites and they wanted to explore and express that. As far as I know, that was a one-time-only event. It was a meeting of artists held over three days in the spring of 1995 in a coffee shop on Corydon Avenue called Heaven: Art, Books, Coffee. Patrick Friesen, who attended, suggested that there are two types of Mennonite writing - pulpit writing and barnyard

writing (Derksen 1995:10), presumably representing religious and secular Mennonite writing. He said that event was a gathering and celebration of barnyard writers. Tim Brandt (Derksen 1995:10), the owner of the coffee shop, said that he was surprised at the freedom people felt in discussing their roots, some of them showing a relatively irreverent sense of humour. The newspaper article I read about this event in *The Mennonite Reporter* celebrated it as having been quite a success (Derksen 1995:10).

I can say only a little about Mennonites outside of any Mennonite organizations, because it was hard for me to find them. Although no one seems to doubt that they live all over the city,[10] Mennonites outside the church seem to organize nothing among themselves formally as Mennonites. I tried to locate an organization of secular Mennonites, but no one had ever heard that anything like that existed. No one knew of a softball team or curling bonspiel, nor of a place Mennonites had intentionally set up as a social club or meeting hall. Certainly the orchestra could be inclusive this way, but I neither asked anyone about that, nor found any mention in the literature that it is. One of the people I asked answered my question about non-religious Mennonite organizations by saying there might not be any, but that he had a cousin who rarely went to church, and he knew that the cousin had a girlfriend with a Mennonite name who was also not religious. Although that bit of information about those two individuals might not mean much, the interviewee found it interesting that Mennonites who did not participate in church activities might still like to associate with one another. Lastly, and most obscurely, I have heard mention a couple of times that there are certain bars in Winnipeg where Mennonites are likely to hang out and discuss their Mennoniteness and their broken relationships with the church. Discussing topics such as those could certainly be an ethnically Mennonite activity. Neither of the people who told me about that could name such a place for me, though, despite seeming to feel sure that they existed. I am only guessing here, because I really have no solid data on

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[10] Someone I supposed was as likely as anyone to know something like this told me that there might be 35 000 people in Winnipeg with Mennonite ancestry. That does not mean those people are all Mennonites, but if some of them are, that would certainly be consistent with the observation that there are non-church-going Mennonites living all over the city

this matter, but I wonder if shared knowledge, past experiences in common, and a comfortable and predictable habitus makes Mennonites socially attractive to one another outside Mennonite institutions just as it does inside.

So far in the essay, I have mentioned several icons that might be used to identify someone as a Mennonite. Among the ones people seem most likely to emphasize is religion (Driedger 1988b:38; Sawatsky 1991:115), and more narrowly, church participation (Wiebe and Wiebe 1997:7; Harder, H. 1998:6). Ancestry is also commonly cited as a meaningful aspect of Mennoniteness (DeFehr 1988:35; Ens, Anna 1996:148), in a way it need not be important to Canadianness, for example (Kymlicka 1998:17). Other ethnic icons which people might include as aspects of their identity include Mennonite food (Coggins 1997b:10; Ens, Anna 1996:16), and knowledge or use of German or Plautdietsch (Rempel, H. 1996:6; WMES 1997:5). According to the accounts I cited, it seems that none of these is singly necessary to Mennoniteness, but all of them can lend meaningfully to one's Mennoniteness. Shared history is also an important aspect of Mennonite identity for many people (Driedger 1980:132). I have discussed history a little already, and I will talk more about its relationship to Mennonite ethnic identities later. Mennonite institutions also play an important role in the Mennonite community, both in representing Mennoniteness, and as centres of production of Mennonite identity. I will address that topic soon.

One might wonder if Mennonites describe their modern ethnic icons as part of the right way to be a Mennonite, just as it seems they once described old markers (Lohrenz 1974:1-3; Hamm 1987:93; Regehr 1996:1). If Mennonite music is iconic, then an example that suggests to me that they do is the on-going debate about the replacement of church music sung in harmony[11] with pop choruses sung in unison. Both Ernest Enns (1997:7) and Victor Doerksen (1997:6) mourn the arrival of the new musical style and argue that the old hymns have been an aspect of Mennonite life too valuable to lose, although Doerksen (1997:6) admits some young people prefer the new way of singing.

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[11] Although it might seem like something characteristic of Mennonites now, Neufeld (1989:16) points out that singing in harmony was considered a sin among Manitoba Mennonites in the 1890s.

The matter is complicated, though because many marks of Mennonite ethnicity are also connected to religious orthodoxy. It becomes difficult to know whether people valourize things out of religious conviction, or because they are tied to ethnic identity, or both.

Felt Conflict between Religion and Ethnic Identity

One of the forces transforming Mennonite identity is the opinion of some that public expressions of Mennonite ethnicity hinder the success of proselytic activities (Sawatsky 1991:113; Baergen 1997:6; Rempel-Burkholder 1997:7). People who are complaining that Mennonite ethnicity interferes with the spread of the Mennonite religion are obviously ascribing Mennonite ethnicity to other Mennonites. Also, it seems that the people who believe ethnicity and religious expansion to be at odds believe not only that converts to the Mennonite religion are not ethnic Mennonites, but also that they are unlikely to become that. Maybe they find Mennonite identity is quite strongly and consistently expressed, since it seems sometimes to create a hostile environment for non-Mennonite visitors to Mennonite social environments. Harry Loewen (1997:11) reports that for some people in church, being Mennonite has more to do with ethnicity than with faith. Some enthusiastically proselytic Christians find this restricting, and leave the Mennonite church so that they can more fully express their faith.

The most notable academic work related to this issue might belong to John Redekop (1987), who wrote a book, *A People Apart,* drawing the conclusion that Mennonite ethnic identity and proselytic ambitions, while both valuable, are at odds. He proposed (1987:153) that the Mennonite Brethren Church be renamed the Evangelical Anabaptist Church, in order to separate it clearly and lexically from ethnic Mennoniteness. Apparently his idea caught on a little among non-academics. A congregation of Korean Americans who affiliate themselves with a regional Mennonite church organization has called their church Evangelical Anabaptist to reflect their distinction from ethnic Mennonites (Longhurst 1996b:9). Apparently also following Redekop's lead, the writer of a letter to the editor of the *Mennonite Reporter* in the summer of 1997 proposed that a new name be chosen for Mennonite ethnic identity. He

supposed that Anabaptist-derived religious ideas and the existence of a Mennonite ethnic identity produced a serious conflict, and since the Mennonite religion already had a good reputation, the conflict could best be alleviated by re-labeling the ethnic identity (Rempel-Burkholder 1997:7). A reply published a month later also supported the idea of separating ethnic identity from religion, but suggested that the word Mennonite remain attached to ethnicity, and that the religion be renamed (Cottrill 1997:6). A church minister I spoke with in 1998 gave me a more palpable example of the same set of ideas. He told me the German language was dying out in their congregation, and that the situation would improve if the language would only die faster. According to him, German spoken casually before or after services, or as a part of them, intimidated visitors, and therefore inhibited the effective proselytic voice of their church.[12]

John Longhurst (1996b:9) wrote an article in the *Mennonite Reporter* a few years ago about Mennonite churches who were deleting the word Mennonite from their names because members there believed they could proselytize more easily or effectively if they would not be associated so closely with the multifaceted reputation that Mennonites have acquired over the years. Of the 1930 churches in North America whose names he checked, 399 of them, about twenty percent, had dropped the word Mennonite from their name. Of the forty-seven Mennonite churches in Winnipeg that Driedger lists (1990:89), seven do not have the word Mennonite in their name.[13] Longhurst (1996b:9) also observes that pastors of such churches report that their superficial disassociation from other Mennonites has had mixed results, and that "in some cases ... using the word 'Mennonite' can aid in outreach, but in others it can hamper it."

Some of the tension in this issue comes not from people's desire to proselytize aggressively, rather from just the idea among some, and not others, that some sort of openness to outsiders should exist in the church (Longhurst 1996b:9). John Redekop (1987:57) says the tension some Mennonites feel

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[12] At another point in the interview, the minister mentioned that Mennonite food remained common and popular in that congregation, and the minister seemed to have no problem with that.

between the impulsion to proselytize and the desire to be able to imagine and describe dichotomizing ethnic boundaries makes ethno-religious Mennonites different from ethno-religious Jews who are generally not proselytic. Halkin (1998:54-55) actually does report a certain amount of tension both between secular and religious Jews, and also between reformed Jews, willing to make religious converts, and Jews who do not favour that, so maybe there are similarities to be drawn, as well. An uncompromising attitude regarding any matter will create social tension, and the discomfort caused to the devout by the perceived impiety of others, as well as that situation's social inverse, is not limited to Mennonites. My point is that some of the tension between Mennonite ethnicity and Mennonite religiosity stems from the desire of some to make the Mennonite religion very attractive to a Canadian general public these days in a way that had never been tried before.

Different Ideas about Mennonite Values

An uneven collection of historical events and geographic and cultural circumstances over the years has produced some formal and informal divisions among Mennonites, both in Winnipeg and more generally. I already wrote something about different ideas people have about what might make one a Mennonite, and this section is about people's various ideas about the way it might be possible to go about being Mennonites.

One of the perceived breaks in the Mennonite community is between generations (Harder, M. 1998:6; Doerksen, Victor 1997:6; Loewen, H. 1997:11; Regehr 1996:231). Frank Epp (1982:447, 498) reports that generation gaps have been a troubling issue at least since the 1920s. I hardly mention generational differences here at all, though, because many attitudes and activities are distributed across generational lines in complex societies like Canada, making generation a culturally less meaningful basis for identity than some other social categories, such as ethnicity, class, or ideology (Hagestad 1984:107). Ideas do not necessarily move down through time from one

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[13] One of those seven has closed since (Brooklands, 1997:14), and two more, The Meeting Place and the Upper Room Church (Longhurst, 1996b:9), could be added, to make it maybe

generation to the next, but might sometimes skip generations, move from younger people to their elders, or more significantly, enter a community from the outside, and be received by individuals of all ages in the same or different ways, based on criteria that are just as likely personal as generational (Berger 1984:220; Hagestad 1984:105). Another argument for the importance of generation in Mennonite identity might draw on Hansen's (1952:494-496) description of first, second, and third generation immigrants. Differences in the ways that Mennonites of different ages conceive of their Mennoniteness involve more than that, though, since Winnipeg Mennonites from the separate migrations have mixed those generations quite thoroughly now (Regehr 1996:44).

Another kind of diversity among Winnipeg Mennonites relates to political and social attitudes. A 1996 phone survey of three hundred Mennonites in rural and urban Manitoba published in a brief article (Enns, A. 1996d:2) in the *Mennonite Reporter* goes a little way to show some of the variation in that constituency. The results of the survey suggested that about an eighty percent majority of those surveyed believed it is important to share one's wealth, believe in God, and do volunteer work. People were in less agreement regarding other matters. Twenty-two percent, mostly rural men, were unlikely to agree that capital punishment is wrong, gun control is good, free health care should be a basic human right, or that Canada should spend more on foreign aid, and less on the military. Another forty percent, mostly rural women, were likely to say that helping others is a sign of Christian faith, there are too many immigrants in Canada, more severe punishments would reduce crime, and aboriginals have not been treated unjustly by the government. The remaining thirty-eight percent, the most likely to have post-secondary educations, to have lived outside Canada, and to volunteer regularly, were also likely to oppose capital punishment, suppose prison sentences are not the best way to rehabilitate criminals, and to believe that aboriginal people have been treated unfairly by the government. I know that information is summary, but it does represent

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eight, now.

something about the variety of social and political attitudes among Mennonites, and also an urban-rural division.

I do not address gender much in this paper at all. That is not because it is not as big an issue for Mennonites as it is for many other Canadians, or because I suppose women and men do not conceive of their Mennoniteness differently. Frieda Klippenstein (1997:145) and Marlene Epp (1987:91) make it clear that Mennonite women and men are different from one another, and used to be more different, but I admit I have mostly neglected those differences in my paper. Someone who was referred to me as knowledgeable about Mennonites and gender told me that Mennonite gender roles are basically the same as Canadian gender roles, and Gloria Redekop (1996:57) says the same, at least regarding the 1950s and 1960s. Marlene Epp (1987:103) writes that Mennonite woman have as much freedom outside the church as Canadian women generally do, but that their roles and freedoms inside it are generally more restricted. The same view seems to have been expressed at a women's Anabaptist theological conference held in Winnipeg from May 9 to 11, 1996. Two hundred five women and ten men met with the goal of developing an "Anabaptist feminist hermeneutic." Some participants who spoke said they felt marginalized by the church because they were women, and felt uncomfortable speaking their minds there (Epp and Enns 1996:1). Similarly, although a few Mennonite women in Winnipeg are church ministers (Kehler, K. 1996:6), it remains an issue for some Mennonites whether that situation is desirable or not. Indeed, while the constitution of the Evangelical Mennonite Church (EMC) states that "The pastor or leading minister of a local church should be male," the pastor of the Aberdeen EMC, Ardith Frey, is a woman, and her status as that is a bit of a controversy in some other EMC churches (Smith, T. 1998:9). Feeling unempowered among Mennonites must surely affect women's attitudes about being a Mennonite, and about who they think Mennonites are within the context of broader Canada.

Differing views on the place of art in Mennonite life also show some of the diversity among Mennonites. Despite some Mennonites' belief that art is not useful, and therefore not really worthwhile (Petkau 1998:26), others find it to be

a meaningful way to interpret and explore Mennonite life. Literature is regarded in much the same way (Tiessen 1988:235). Partly, it is the role of artists and writers to make the world strange, so that people are allowed to examine it in a new way. In that sense, all writers and artists are a little marginal in society, and Mennonite ones are no different (Tiessen 1988:235). At the same time that some Mennonites fail to see the worth of art, the *Mennonite Reporter* had a regular section for the discussion of Mennonite artists and art (Braid 1996:10), which was, of course, generally supportive of them. Hildi Froese Tiessen (1988:241) suggests, similarly, that while many Mennonites embrace their authors, and there certainly is an active Mennonite press, "many members of the Mennonite community continue to regard the writer of fiction as an iconoclast, a heretic, or simply a rascal." I wonder if differing attitudes about art and literature are related to people's level of education, but I do not know. The differences in Mennonite attitudes about art are just another example showing that Mennonites need not be united to be Mennonite.

Regehr (1988:63), Vogt (1980:138), Redekop, Ainlay, and Siemens (1995:29), and both of the Mennonite businesspeople I spoke with described an ideological conflict between Mennonite Christianity and Canadian business practices. Interestingly, neither of the church ministers I asked about that conflict agreed that it existed. The conflict relates mostly to businesspeople's tendency to priorize practical business matters, such as price, quality, and reliability, over Mennonite values such as not working on Sundays, or avoiding litigation. On one side of the debate, some Mennonites feel a little ambivalent about making wealth a goal, sometimes adding that capitalist values and emphases, such as individual achievement and material acquisition, interfere with Mennonite values and customs such as service and mutual aid (Redekop *et al* 1995:110). Another point of view seems to underlie a chapter in Leo Driedger's little book *Mennonites in Winnipeg* (1990:48-55), where he produced a sort of role call of some of the most successful Mennonite businesspeople in the city. Regehr (1988:62) has made a similar list celebrating the successes of Mennonite businesspeople all over Canada. Redekop, Ainlay, and Siemens conclude (1995:125) that Mennonite business

people are, on the whole, no more materialistic than others in the Mennonite community, but that businesspeople become symbols of the problems with which capitalism confronts all Mennonites.

A debate more controversial among Mennonites, and generally much less central to their lives, than any of those others is the place of homosexuals in the Mennonite church. Mennonite homosexuals maintain an organization called the Supportive Congregations Network (SCN). Someone at the SCN told me that the Conference of Mennonites in Canada (CMC) takes the official position that a homosexual orientation is acceptable, but draws the line at same-sex sexual activity. This is more tolerant than the CMC's 1986 statement on homosexuality, which "welcom[ed] homosexuals into the church but reserv[ed] membership and leadership for 'repentant and forgiven sinners' " (Funk-Unrau 1999:13). As with anyone who is not whole-heartedly accepted, being marginalized must affect the way homosexuals think about being Mennonite. Also since some Mennonite churches welcome non-celibate homosexuals as members, and some do not (Funk-Unrau 1999:13), it is reasonable to conclude that heterosexual Mennonites have differing attitudes on the subject, and do not all concur with the official statement. I have encountered no suggestion that this affects the question of whether they are Mennonites or not, but I think it must affect the way they conceive of their Mennoniteness.

Mennonite Denominations

Mennonites have for years been dividing their churches into something they call denominations. Historically, these divisions have been expressed through both lifestyle and religious activities (Friesen, J. 1993:155-156), but the differences are generally less clear now (Ens, Anna 1996:244). Ediger (1997: 151) suggests there is no list of objective diacritica that can be used to form a neat taxonomy of Mennonite subgroups, despite that they do sometimes respond differently to certain situations. Religious Mennonites agree on the special value a few key matters, such as peace, the ability of Jesus Christ to provide salvation, distinctive interpretations of a few parts of the New Testament

(Driedger and Kraybill 1994:26-27), and the notion that religion should somehow be a participant activity (Hamm 1987:32; Funk, K. 1997:7). Nevertheless, John J. Friesen (1997:125) maintains it is difficult to characterize the theology of fragmented church groups inclusively. I raised this issue because it is unclear to me if the holders of these diverse religious views, and participants in sometimes independent organizations, would stay together if they were not united by the conception that they were part of the same ethnic group. Francis (1955:267) reports that in the past, ethnicity has held Mennonites together when religion was otherwise dividing them.

The religious differences now seem to be centred mostly on theological preferences and on opinions about how faith should be expressed. Regehr (1996:12-13) and Kraus (1990) list versions of Christianity such as Evangelicalism, Pietism, Fundamentalism, Dispensationalism, liberalism, and Bender's (1944) interpretation of Anabaptism, and says they have had more or less influence on different Mennonites during the last half century. Significantly, these theological differences do not seem to raise doubts among anyone as to whether others might be Mennonite or not. Everyone I asked said that they cooperated regularly and enthusiastically with other Mennonite churches and denominations in the city. There is even a word, inter-Mennonite, to describe activities and projects in which different denominations cooperate. People told me Mennonites were united across denominational lines by activities such as attending and financially supporting Mennonite schools, or supporting occasional or on-going efforts toward various Mennonite causes such as economic development or missionary endeavors. Another cooperative activity was a joint worship service held in the Winnipeg Convention Centre on June 16, 1996, which about 4600 people from fifty-two Mennonite churches around Manitoba attended (Enns, A. 1996a:1). Something else suggesting inter-denominational similarity to me is a March 1997 announcement (Dueck, D. 1997:10) that Northdale Mennonite Church, affiliated with the General Conference, and Valley Gardens Community Church, a Mennonite Brethren church, were merging. Northdale had too small a congregation to warrant maintaining its building, and Valley Garden had too many people to fit easily

into its building. The new congregation was renamed Jubilee Mennonite Church, and kept denominational affiliations as both a Mennonite Brethren and a General Conference church.

In addition to the variation between denominations, everyone I spoke with, as well as some writers (Goosen 1997:11; Stoesz, D. 1985:43; Ens, Anna 1996:172-200; Longhurst 1996b:9) suggest a considerable amount of ideological variation exists within denominations and congregations as well. Maybe it would only be surprising if that were not the case. When I asked different people if they thought there was as much diversity of ideas within a congregation or a denomination as between them, I got a range of answers from 'no', through 'oh, I don't know' and 'on some issues, but not on others'. The merger of the General Conference Mennonite Church (GC), composed mostly of Russian Mennonites in western North America, including several churches in Winnipeg, and the Mennonite Church (MC), which is made up mostly of Swiss Mennonites in Ontario and the Eastern United States, provides an opportunity to see some intra-denominational variation that matches some inter-denominational similarity.[14] Regarding misgivings about the coming merger, a 1998 article (Zuercher 1998b:18) in the *Canadian Mennonite* reported that fifteen percent of MCs thought GCs generally too conservative, and twenty-four percent of them said the GCs were too liberal. At the same time, twenty-one percent of GCs called MCs too conservative, and seventeen percent thought them too liberal. It might be possible to conclude from that that GCs were indeed a little more conservative, but it seems more reasonable to me to suppose that members of the two groups were mostly similar to each other, and also quite diverse among themselves. Ediger (1997:151) concludes that it is more sensible to "take the high view of Mennonite peoplehood" than to "dignify this [denominational] diversity," which has been constructed mostly during historical instances of intolerance.

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[14] I mentioned earlier that Mennonite ethnicity in Winnipeg sometimes excludes Swiss Mennonites, but that should not affect the point about denominations that I am making here.

Being Mennonite is not something uniformly shared by people who are Mennonites, but that need not affect the Mennoniteness of those people. Different ideas about what makes one a Mennonite can all have legitimacy for the people who value those ideas. Two examples in this chapter were ancestry and religious participation, and although some people think one or the other, or both, are necessary before one could rightly be called a Mennonite, others disagree. Similarly, people have many, sometimes conflicting, attitudes about what Mennonites can or should do as Mennonites, and the way they should go about living their lives. There is some controversy related to questions of what gender roles should be, for example, or what the place art might take in Mennonite life. There are also many broad social relationships that affect one's conception of what it is to be Mennonite. Winnipeg Mennonites sometimes combine themselves within an ethnic category that includes Mennonites elsewhere, or maybe only certain Mennonites elsewhere. Some people believe Mennonites are in some way partly ethnic Germans. For Christian Mennonites at least, maybe broader collective similarities with, and differences from, Christians, as a general category, also form part of the Mennonite sense of self. This is all part of Mennoniteness, and contributes to the formation of who Mennonites, the people, collectively are.

An Imagined Community

Most modern Mennonites in Winnipeg keep only an uneven, fragmented sort of acquaintance with most of the other Mennonites they know. The social and economic relations among Mennonites living in the big city and participating in Winnipeg's industrial bureaucratic economy today are not as close-knit or comprehensive as they were in Mennonite farming villages of old. Ulf Hannerz (1983:358) observes that, outside their own family and circle of close friends, people nowadays usually encounter particular individuals in only particular situations, and really only know them in those contexts. That seems true for Mennonites, for whom contextual acquaintances might be formed while singing in the same choir, or volunteering for the same cause. As Benedict Anderson (1983:16) might predict, one important consequence of this change is that people's conception of who is a Mennonite, and of how they and others fit under that label, has become an imagined community. Mennonite community has become based primarily on the common knowledge that Mennonites possess about what other Mennonites are doing and saying, the belief that margins exist around the Mennonite community, and the conviction that other Mennonites somehow believe the same. This is not to say Mennonite community is imagined in the same way by everyone, or based on the same knowledge. The ethnic identities of people with different life experiences and social contacts will likely be different, so imagined communities might also include different people, for different reasons, depending on who is imagining the community, and in what context they are thinking about it (Herzfeld 1997:13; Appadurai 1996:33). Community is likely to be imagined as an extension of one's own identity. One's ignorance of others, or indifference to them, aids the formation of a sense of broad solidarity, since a selected portion, but not necessarily all, of those other people's activities and attitudes can be drawn on to legitimate one's own identity and cast it as broadly shared (Herzfeld 1997:7).

That there be a Mennonite community at all is something vitally important to the existence of Mennonite identity. I have argued already that no one can be a Mennonite alone, and that ethnicity requires a plurality of people to agree

that they are together. Part of the meaning in life comes from, or is at least attached to, our ethnic identity (Fishman 1989: 30). Shils (1971:130) argues that our lives could have no meaning if we had no social community in which to live them. Face-to-face personal relationships can carry a certain amount of weight, but the mass of the larger Mennonite imagined community, and the amount of activity that can be credited to those people, can make Mennonite a much more compelling, inspiring, and flexible identity for people. I think that if there were no Mennonite imagined community, Mennonite identity could only be something much weaker than it is now.

The imagined community is supported in many ways. Donald Kraybill (1988:169) has concluded that Mennonite ethnicity has moved substantially away from being based on cultural distinctness - German language, characteristic agrarian lifestyle, and so on - to being expressed through institutional participation. I think that a Mennonite community is imagined, to a considerable extent, through those institutions and through Mennonite newspapers. Anything that lets Mennonites know that there are others who believe themselves to be Mennonite, and with whom they have something meaningfully Mennonite in common, is supporting the imagined community. Among the many important institutional framers and producers of the imagined community in Winnipeg are personal and public knowledge of the activities of the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), the Crosstown Credit Union, and the Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA). I have included a few details about each of those in the next dozen or so pages. I have also described a little about a few Mennonite periodicals. Anderson (1983:41) gives print media a central role in the creation of imagined communities, and they do seem to be vital to Mennonite communities.

Communications Media

Anderson (1983:30, 39) maintains that books and newspapers are a vital component of imagined communities. That must be true of Mennonites. They not only have books, they have printing houses. They not only have newspapers, they have lots of newspapers, and they have magazines, and

scholarly and professional journals, and in Winnipeg, even a radio show or two. Only a scant twelve percent of the Mennonites in Canada do not receive one or another Mennonite periodical (Zuercher 1998b:13). I cannot say how Mennonite was being defined in this survey,[1] but it found that sixty-one percent of the recipients liked their periodicals well. About another twenty percent found them too conservative, and around thirteen percent thought them too liberal (Zuercher 1998b:13). One could interpret that little survey by concluding that about thirty-three percent of subscribers to Mennonite papers, or about twenty-eight percent of Canadian Mennonites, are receiving periodicals whose content or editorial views they find unsatisfying. The *MB Herald* is subscribed to by church congregations, not individuals, but most of the unsatisfied subscribers must actually be paying for their disappointing papers. Here is my guess at why so many Mennonites are reading Mennonite periodicals.

I wonder if the newspapers are not Winnipeggers' most direct and regularly encountered connection to Mennonites elsewhere. Articles report on what is going on among Mennonites in Winnipeg, all over Canada, and around the world. They fill Winnipeggers in on Mennonite goings-on, both in Winnipeg and elsewhere, with a relatively continuous flow of details - more details than Mennonites are likely to get about other Mennonites in any other way. Some papers, such as *The Messenger*, put out by the Evangelical Mennonite Conference, have a more limited circulation, and others, such as the *Canadian Mennonite*, have a more diverse readership, but all of them connect and inform some set of strangers about one another. Judging by Regehr's (1996:432-434) list, there are as many Mennonite periodicals now, about twenty-six, as there have ever been, and more than there have sometimes been, although some have been started and shut down over the years.

As one might suppose, nearly all the Mennonite papers are sponsored in one way or another by some particular church organization (Regehr 1996:432-434). Many religious organizations put out little periodical publications, so it is reasonable to wonder if the existence of more or less exclusively Mennonite publications is related primarily to ethnic identity, or if it is something religious.

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[1] I would guess that Mennonite here means church members.

Indeed, some Mennonite periodicals, such as *Die Mennonitische Rundschau*, are nearly completely preoccupied with religious topics, but others have much broader scopes, and make their relationship to Mennonite ethnicity quite clear. John Redekop (1987:60) claims that the periodical which best expressed the Mennonite combination of religious conviction and ethnic identity was the *Mennonite Mirror*, which was published in Manitoba by the Mennonite Literary Society, but was discontinued in 1990. I will describe a few periodicals very summarily to try to provide a rough picture of the character of their content. While periodicals are a means for Mennonites to learn about one another, they are simultaneously also a means for Mennonites to present themselves to one another. I suppose that the Mennonite periodicals in combination would provide quite a good glimpse of Mennonite life, ambitions, commonalities, and diversity.

Some of the papers show a considerable amount of overlap in coverage, and two, the *Mennonite Brethren Herald* and the *Mennonite Reporter / Canadian Mennonite*, share some material from time to time. Some quick examples of that are an article about a special concert involving several Mennonite choirs, which was duplicated in both the *MB Herald* and in the *Mennonite Reporter* (Thiessen, Jen 1997a:9; 1997b:13), and also reported on in *Der Bote* (Braun 1997:8). Similarly, Paul Schrag's coverage of a religious conference in India, was printed in the *MB Herald* (1997b:4-9), and in the *Mennonite Reporter* (1997a:1-2). Stories on MCC seem to be printed in most Mennonite papers much of the time.

I found the back-issues of the *Mennonite Reporter* useful for gathering information to write this essay. It was discontinued in 1997 and replaced with a smaller journal called the *Canadian Mennonite*, the content of which is generally more concerned with religious topics. Indeed, the mission statement of the new paper says its goal is "to promote ... relationships within the church." The *Canadian Mennonite* was formed in 1998, when the General Conference Mennonite Church and the Mennonite Church merged. The new paper is sponsored by, and represents and serves, the people of that new church organization (Peachey 1997:2), which is a different group of people than read

the old *Mennonite Reporter*. I have cited articles from the *Canadian Mennonite* several times in my essay, but I will describe its predecessor in some detail, because I read a few years of that paper. I think the memory of some of what they learned in the *Mennonite Reporter* must still be helping many people imagine their Mennonite community in the present.

The *Mennonite Reporter* covered current events among Mennonites all over Canada. That included celebrations (MB Herald 1995:18; MCC Can. 1997:16), concerts (Thiessen, Jen 1997b:13), charitable activities (Enns, A. 1997b:2), field trips (Siemens, C. 1997:12), or changes in the state of whatever might change. There were reports on schools (Westgate 1996:18; Enns, A. 1996c:4), on various inter-Mennonite organizations (Sensenig 1995:4; Heinrichs, E. 1995:10), and on important or interesting events related to church organizations (Epp and Enns 1996:1; Dueck, D. 1997:10). It featured regular sections on Mennonite artists (Loewen, M. 1997b:8), Canadian national politics (Longhurst 1996a:4), and television. A feature on page 2 of each issue, called International Focus, described the activities of non-Mennonite Christians in Canada and around the world. The *Mennonite Reporter* had a dynamic letters-to-the-editor section, from which I have cited nine letters in this essay. It contained quite a few articles examining social issues, especially ones related to human rights and justice (Terichow 1996:1; Enns, A. 1997a:6), usually taking what seems to me a relatively left-of-centre point of view on politics and economics. Ideas about what it is to be a Mennonite, or how it should be, including notions of ethnicity and religion, are an occasional theme in the letters-to-the-editor section (Baer 1996:6; Cottrill 1997:6; Baergen 1997:6; Rempel-Burkholder 1997:7), and come up from time to time in topical articles (Braid 1996:10) and editorials (Rempel, R. 1996:6).

The *Mennonite Brethren Herald* seems mostly concerned with applying some Mennonite Brethren version of Christian ideology in a Canadian cultural environment. It is mostly concerned with religious matters, and hardly at all with ethnicity. There are relatively many, and relatively long articles that seem essentially composed of coaching in how to express Mennonite values through lifestyle. Most of these refer to the Bible (Loewen, C. 1997:4), and some refer to

Mennonite tradition (Johnson 1998:4; Faber 2000:26), and some refer to neither (Coggins 1997a:2; Moser 1998:4). The *MB Herald* sometimes takes a left of centre stance on economics (Hess 1995:10), but a conservative view of matters related to morality or family life (Toews, J. 1999:7; Reapsome 1998:5). There are also always reports on the same sorts of mundane current events (Concord 1998:14; Brandt, S. 1998:13) that I listed in the paragraph on the *Mennonite Reporter*, but those stories are often relatively briefer. Like every Mennonite newspaper, the *MB Herald* reports on various MCC activities (Thiessen and Martin 1999:12; MCC (Can) 1999:15), and on major church events (Coggins 1997b:9; Schrag, P. 1997b:4), and it seems to have a special interest in proselytic activities (Balzer 1999:12). Like other church-sponsored Mennonite papers, the *MB Herald* generally makes no lexical distinctions among the people who adhere to the Mennonite religion. For example, an article about Mennonites in the post-Soviet Ukraine (Schroeder 1999:11) speaks about Mennonites in the very same way that an article, on the same page, speaks about the members of a Hindi-speaking Mennonite Brethren congregation in Surrey, BC (Raj 1999:10-11).

The target audience of *Der Bote* is German-speaking Mennonites all over the world, but a *Bote* staff member told me most of its subscriber base lives in Manitoba and in Germany, where a population of recent migrants from the Ukraine have settled. *Der Bote* has six hundred twenty-three subscribers (maybe a thousand readers) in Winnipeg, but their average age, according to a survey conducted by *Bote* staff in the middle 1990s, is about seventy-five years old. Every magazine-sized issue of *Der Bote* includes about a half dozen pages of obituaries. In a regular section called *Mennonitischer Weltspiegel*,[2] *Der Bote* prints brief accounts of many of the same sorts of current events stories that other papers print (Kampen 2000:7; Enns, A. 2000:16), although the spin is a little different, I would guess representing a different worldview. For example, while the *MB Herald* called a choir concert "radiant" and "flawless" (Thiessen, Jen 1997b:13), the most enthusiastic compliment I found in *Der Bote's* coverage of the same event was "well rehearsed" (Braun 1997:8),

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[2] Very loosely translated, that means 'a look at the Mennonite world.'

reflecting a Mennonite tradition that gives little recognition to pure works of art, but has a very high regard for competence in anything (Tiessen 1988:235). Although I did not conduct a very thorough search, I found no article in *Der Bote'* that I would call a discussion of Mennonite identity. Some fairly unique subject matter that it does include, though, is information about Mennonites in the former Soviet Union (Spencer 2000:9), and recent Mennonite migrants from there to Germany (Warkentin 2000:33), which is rare anywhere else. *Der Bote* also prints stories (Kroeger 2000:31), articles (Schirmacher 2000:36; Hann 2000:5), and pictures (Warkentin 2000:34) describing life in the historic Mennonite Commonwealth in Russia. Like most Mennonite papers, it also follows the activities of Mennonite missionaries (Schrag, L. 2000:18), and lately has had a page on the Mennonite Central Committee each issue.

Depending on what qualifies something as a scholarly journal, there might be seven Mennonite scholarly journals published in North America (Regehr 1996:432). Academic publications surely fit into society differently than the popular press does, but they can play an important role in helping create community, too. Whenever people can provide some service to others on terms, and within social networks, that seem to lie within those people's conceptions of their own ethnic communities, it affects the way those people think about their ethnic identity (Breton 1964:194). Whatever Mennonites can do for each other as Mennonites affects the way all of them are thinking about being Mennonite. Mennonite academic literature should form a significant part of a credible Mennonite post-secondary education, and scholarly journals comprise a dynamic part of any academic literature. Despite that many Mennonites have probably never read much Mennonite scholarship, scholarly journals contribute meaningfully to Mennonite identity by becoming an aspect of Mennonite educations, and by communicating among Mennonites, in an academic manner, meaningful things about Mennonites.

The *Journal of Mennonite Studies,* for example, is published annually in Winnipeg by the Chair of Mennonite Studies at the University of Winnipeg. Its publication is equally co-sponsored by the Dr. David Friesen Foundation and the Multicultural Secretariat of Canada (Enns, A. 1996c:4). I found it on the

shelf in the libraries at both the University of Manitoba and the University of Winnipeg, and at the Canadian Mennonite Bible College. Its inside cover calls it "a Canadian interdisciplinary journal dealing with Mennonite issues," and among other things, it includes articles on history (Toews, J.B. 1995), ideology (Toews, P. 1988), identity (Redekop, C. 1984; Sawatsky 1991), economics (Regehr 1988), gender (Epp, M. 1987), family life (Redekop, P. 1986; Driedger and Bergen 1995), education (Dyck, B. 1993), and art (Berg 1988). It also includes some creative writing (Harder, J. 1984:86; Reimer, A. 1997) in every issue.

The *Journal of Mennonite Studies* reviews as many as two dozen books of scholarship and creative writing by or about Mennonites every year, and Mennonite newspapers review books, too (Loewen, H. 2000:37; Loewen, M. 1997b:8). I am left to presume there must be two dozen Mennonite books published every year. These books explore many aspects of Mennonite life, and I will not try to give any overview, but I will make one comment about some of them. McCormack (1997:110) points out that the *Mennonites in Canada* series of history books was conceptualized for and sponsored by Mennonites, even though its goals coincided with those purported by federal multiculturalism programs. I think other Mennonite books, such as *Canadian Mennonites and the Challenge of Nationalism* (Dueck, Abe 1994), and even Rudy Wiebe's (1962) novel *Peace Shall Destroy Many*, similarly explore themes which are simultaneously Mennonite and Canadian (Loewen, H. 1983:124). It seems to me that that matches the popular Mennonite identity of being Canadians and simultaneously distinct from other Canadians.

Faith and Life Communications, a Mennonite organization, produces religious radio programs which are broadcast weekly in German, Plautdietsch, and English. They are also translated to a few other languages for broadcast elsewhere (Ens, Anna 1996:236). Driedger (1990:67-68) lists five other weekly Mennonite radio shows with different target audiences. Much like the newspapers, the idea that one is Mennonite listening to a Mennonite radio program at the same time that other Mennonites do reinforces the sense of community that people feel with one another. If people talk about the show that

each of them listened to separately, I guess that makes the broadcasts an even more integral part of the community.

Institutions, Imagined Community, and Iconicity

At the same time that Mennonite institutions contribute to the formation of a Mennonite imagined community, they possess iconicity as well. I have already discussed the role of institutions in imagined communities conceptually, but let me address iconicity briefly once more. Many people find participating in these organizations to be a satisfying way to express their Mennoniteness (Kraybill 1996:36), just as the act of speaking Plautdietsch is a good way to express it (Rempel, H. 1996:6). Participating in institutions is also one of the ways people can affirm their own sense of Mennoniteness, or steer it within valued social frameworks. A flag can bring to one's mind values and attitudes that are not very directly or explicitly communicated by the appearance of the flag (Foster 1991:239), and passing encounters with images of Mennonite organizations, such as seeing one mentioned in the Winnipeg Free Press (Enns, A 1996b:7), or just the knowledge that one is somehow a part of them, might sometimes involve a great deal of ethnic meaning for Mennonites. While the MCC might be quite compellingly iconic for many Mennonites (Kraybill 1996:56), the Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA), which is much smaller, might be less so. I think MEDA also possesses iconically Mennonite significance, though, judging from the report of someone who told me that some Winnipeg Mennonite businesspeople choose not to participate in that organization for the very reason that it is Mennonite. Those people might participate in similar charitable organizations, but the person at MEDA told me some Mennonites feel uncomfortable with Mennonite ones. In the lives of Mennonites, Mennonite institutions simultaneously play an iconic role and play a role in the creation of imagined community. I hope that my hardly delineated description of their simultaneous roles reflects that reality in a constructive way. Icons build social community because people share an association with their meaning, and imagined community is built from public knowledge that people

share, and institutions can contribute to one's sense of Mennoniteness by providing both meaning and knowledge.

Church Services

Before I get to any more broadly organized institutions, let me mention the Sunday morning worship service, which is an important aspect of Mennonite community to many people (Braul 1997:7; Doerksen, Victor 1997:6; Dyck, G. 1997:6). Thousands of Mennonites all over Winnipeg meet reliably every Sunday morning. Not only that, but Mennonites all over North America and all over the world do the same. Anderson (1983:31) asserts that a notion of simultaneous action within an imagined community is central to its existence. People can feel something substantial in common with others who they know also engage regularly in a particular activity at the same time they do. All the churchgoers engage in a more or less similar set of activities, and all for many of the same important reasons. They sing from the same songbooks[3] (Lapp 1992:7), and interpret the Bible in some characteristically Mennonite ways (Driedger and Kraybill 1994:27). This notion must extend right into individual congregations, because Mennonite ceremonies are mostly passive activities (Kehler, M. 1997:7), and many people there really do not know each other (Harder, M. 1998:6; Friesen, M. 1997:7). Their regular attendance at the same place and time creates a significant bond among church members that Albrecht (1997:9) describes as community, and Valerie Smith (1998:6) thinks should be compared to a family. Furthermore, people can drive down the street and see other Mennonite churches, or read in whatever paper about what has been happening there, and that location might acquire meaning for them, because they know that people there sing and pray in a similar way, at the same time each week as they do. That kind of imagined map of physical places can act to reify conceptions of social community (Herzfeld 1997:13).

The essence of the ethnic meaning of church attendance for Mennonites is not contained in the fact that they are attending Canadian churches, or that they are attending Christian churches, although they are. What they are doing

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[3] Anderson (1983:132) calls singing a "physical realization of the imagined community."

most meaningfully as it relates to their ethnic identity, is attending Mennonite churches. When Mennonites eat pasta, it hardly makes them Italian, and when Italians go to Mennonite churches, it will not likely alter their ethnic identity to anything more Mennonite. Eating pasta might be a meaningfully Italian activity for an ethnic Italian, though, and when Mennonites go to Mennonite churches, it is a meaningfully Mennonite activity. This argument relates very directly to what I said earlier about ascription. Mennonite activities have Mennonite meaning because Mennonites believe they do.

Church-sponsored social events can support community in the same way. That includes things like Bible studies, softball games, potlucks (Dyck, G. 1997:6), special concerts (Thiessen, Jen 1997b:13), or practical task-oriented associations, such as the traditional sewing circles in which many older women still involve themselves (Redekop, G. 1996:103). A Winnipeg church minister I spoke with about church when I was researching my essay told me that these social activities make the most important contribution to feelings of togetherness in their congregation, and that worship services come second.

There are also regular church conferences, where thousands of Mennonites from different regions or Mennonite groups congregate. Nearly no one in attendance actually meets more than the tiniest minority of everyone else in attendance, but they share significant, fairly unique experiences together nevertheless (Enns, A. 1997c:1; Schrag, P. 1997a:1; Coggins 1997b:9-11). Reports presented locally about those conferences play a role in forming an imagined Mennonite community, too.

MCC

The Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) has become one of the most important institutions in Mennonite society (Kraybill 1996:23; Ens, Anna 1996:243). It allows diverse Mennonites to focus on their commonalities, and to disregard their differences. Fifteen different Mennonite church groups support the MCC, and it recruits thirty thousand volunteers of various sorts each year from a North American Mennonite population of over two hundred thirty thousand (Roth, J. 1996:3; Kauffman and Driedger 1991:17). That broad

cooperative participation and the evidence that Mennonites see of one another's participation, not to mention the news they hear and read, is an important means through which Mennonites create their community. When I was in Winnipeg in 1998, I included questions about the MCC in each of my interviews, and almost everyone had positive things to say. One person, who admitted ignorance about the MCC, seemed ambivalent, and another questioned the appropriateness of MCC's regular cooperation with what he called "secular humanitarian volunteer-placing agencies." A 1989 survey of North American Mennonite church members concluded that a mere three percent of those surveyed had a negative opinion of the MCC, while thirty percent more were neutral (Kraybill 1996:43). Kraybill (1996:44) reports that sixty-six percent of respondents claimed to be satisfied or more than satisfied with what the MCC has been doing.

Primarily, the Mennonite Central Committee is a non-governmental aid organization. In 1995, it worked with a budget of fifty-three million dollars to organize nine hundred workers in fifty countries, including Canada (Sensenig 1995:4). Most of those were highly qualified specialists practicing in their own fields or engaged in educational endeavors (Sensenig 1995:4; Mathies 1995:122). Another common MCC project is to attempt to facilitate more open, respectful political and economic interactions among various constituencies and their representatives (Mathies 1995:130). The MCC initiates few projects of its own, preferring rather to work with local people or organizations who invite that participation (Koontz 1996:62). In addition to those sorts of far-away, difficult-to-understand projects, MCC organizes relief efforts after disasters such as floods or fires, organizes the chain of Ten Thousand Villages stores,[4] and acts as a distributor for the craftspeople whose stuff is sold there (Sensenig 1995:4). The MCC also keeps an office in Ottawa (and one in Washington) to keep up to date on what the government is doing, and to help themselves plan ahead. That office is registered as an official lobbyist (Driedger and Kraybill

[4] Someone told me that MCC would prefer it if the stores were independent, but that not all of them are.

1994:186), but an MCC staff person I asked about that told me it is less a voice for Mennonites than a listening device through which to learn.

Of course the majority of Mennonites do not volunteer any great amount of time or energy to the MCC, but nearly all of them can participate significantly simply by donating money. Contributing in any way is certainly a means for people to express an identity actively, and to feel like a part of something. For those people, donating to the MCC can form part of a dichotomy that includes themselves with the Mennonites, and distinguishes them from non-Mennonites who are presumably not so supportive of the MCC. Kraybill (1996:36) maintains that this kind of participation is meaningful for many people. Someone I spoke with at the MCC said a certain number of the donations they get each year come from unexpected, sometimes unknown, sources. Of course anyone can donate money to the MCC, but I suspect that supporting the MCC could be no less an act of identifying with Mennonites for Mennonites who are not church members as for the people who donate regularly through their churches. Expressing their Mennonite identity, and participating in Mennonite community, partly by supporting the MCC leaves Mennonite individuals an amount of personal flexibility and mobility that an identity centred on language or farming might not be able to. Also, unlike the village churches of the past, supporting the MCC is something entirely voluntary (Kraybill 1996:29), which matches the popular Canadian value of independence pretty well (Gwyn 1995:83).

Another active but indirect means by which any Mennonite can participate in the MCC is by stating their opinion. In 1995, the MCC was planning to send two representatives around to many churches to ask what people wanted from the MCC, with the promise that MCC would seriously consider altering its practices according to popular opinion (MCC 1995:B3). Another example of the importance of popular opinion at the MCC is that it withdrew its support for the 1995 Women in Ministry Conference because of misgivings about the New Age and radical feminist tendencies of one of the people scheduled to speak there. The stated reason for the withdrawal of this support concerned the MCC's "responsibility to the larger community" (Jantzen

1996:1). Although the opinions of some feminist Mennonites were disregarded in that case (Jantzen 1996:1), generally feeling like one has a voice in matters is absolutely an important part of feeling included, and MCC can give Mennonites that.

The MCC's reputation allows Mennonites to be positively stereotyped in Canada. The MCC has a good reputation among non-Mennonite Canadians for doing good things (Enns, A. 1996d:2; Koontz 1996:60). It conscientiously publicizes itself, and often makes the news (Enns, A. 1996b:7). Not only does the MCC gain recognition for Mennonites from other Canadians, but because it expresses Mennonite values, it allows Mennonites to receive positive recognition for doing things that they want to be doing. This lends Mennonites some legitimacy as people who contribute to Canada, and to Canada's reputation abroad. The results of a small phone survey that MCC conducted in Manitoba in 1996 suggested that about fifty-four percent of the Manitoba general public had heard of MCC, and that thirty-seven percent had a positive view of it. John Longhurst, MCC's head of media relations, suggested that seemed high considering that MCC does most of its work abroad, and little under its own name (Enns, A. 1996d:2). Presumably out of respect for Mennonite interests, and because the MCC seemed to be a reasonable voice for those interests, the government of Canada consulted MCC when it was formulating its new conscientious objector policy in 1996 (MCC Can. 1996:3). More evidence of the high public regard for the MCC is the relatively large amount of funding they receive from the Canadian International Development Agency (Driedger and Kraybill 1994:185). Although MCC activities lend Mennonites a positive public image, it is not reasonable to say they are conscientiously aimed at image management. Mathies (1995:118) presents all possible evidence that they are motivated by the most earnest conviction.

The MCC has also developed into a sort of educational institution among Mennonites. During the first six months after returning home from work on an MCC project, thirty-eight percent of MCC workers spent between twenty-five and one hundred hours educating people about what they had been doing, and sixteen percent spent over one hundred hours during those first six months.

Most of that time was spent telling friends, family, and colleagues, many of whom are other Mennonites, about their work with MCC (Mathies 1995:127). Also, MCC organizes speaker tours of Mennonite churches and schools and so forth, where people meet and hear from MCC workers and from beneficiaries of projects that MCC has been involved in (Mathies 1995:127). Of course people in Winnipeg are also likely to meet these former MCC workers incidentally at various social functions and religious events. Acquiring special knowledge about the world, and Mennonites' effect on it, in an environment clearly identified as Mennonite must reinforce people's perspective on the rest of the world, and about their own place in it. That makes the MCC an important part of peoples' notion of Mennoniteness, and of how Mennonites fit in among other people.

A Mennonite I spoke with about voluntary service, although we were not discussing the MCC, suggested that doing these sorts of things is a way for Mennonites to distinguish themselves from Canadian majoral society. Instead of protecting themselves from perceived threats from the world by avoiding everyone else, as they have done in the past (Janzen, W. 1967:1), maybe Mennonites today try to deal with the ideological tension they feel in relation to the rest of the world by trying to change everyone else. In that sense, big commitments of time and money given for humanitarian aid can replace cultural distinctiveness as a dichotomy-forming mechanism. Essentially, part of what distinguishes Mennonites from others in some Mennonites' minds is that Mennonites work for peace and justice (Driedger and Kraybill 1994:51). There are two apparent conflicts in that notion. Firstly, the sort of people who can afford to fund the MCC must in fact be partially, maybe indirectly, responsible for the very economic disparity that they are trying to redress (McDowell 1994:35; Gundy 1990:37). Secondly, a 1996 MCC phone survey suggested eighty percent of non-Mennonite Manitobans believed they "should volunteer," that foreign aid works, and that helping inner city youth reduces crime (Enns, A. 1996d:2). The same survey found that an equal proportion, eighty percent, of Mennonites thought they should volunteer and that they should spend less on themselves and give more to others, so Mennonites probably do not

monopolize values like those. Nevertheless, ambition becomes Mennonite ambition when it is Mennonites who are setting goals, and MCC activities make many Mennonites feel different from other people (Kraybill 1996:28). I found an example of the way the MCC can make a Mennonite-Canada dichotomy at the MCC sale in Winnipeg in 1998. A newspaper article about the sale included no mention of this (Can. Mennonite 1998:16), but the official sale brochure (MCC 1998) reported that some of the money raised would go to buy medical supplies for hospitals in Iraq, trade with which was at that time under an embargo by Canada (Knox 2000:A11). Someone told me later that the money had indeed been used that way. In that instance, MCC was acting basically in accord with Mennonite values of human equality and the injustice of war, but apparently indifferently to official Canadian interests in the Middle East.

Because the MCC provides Mennonites with the opportunity to cooperate publicly in projects they admire, and because people can see evidence of their collective efforts in its achievements, the MCC supports imagined community among Mennonites. Mennonites can know what other Mennonites must be doing because the see and hear about what the MCC is doing. The MCC helps reinforce Mennonites' place as Canadians by doing things that are generally admired by other Canadians.

Crosstown Credit Union

The Crosstown Credit Union is another example of an institution that helps form a Mennonite imagined community in Winnipeg and represent a sort of boundary around it. Membership at the credit union is something that about ten thousand Mennonites can equally and objectively say they have in common. Not only do they know they share a financial institution whose policies express some of their values and pursue some of their collective ambitions, but they could until recently feel confident that people who are not participating in their community do not share that institution with them. Membership does nothing to identify unacquainted Mennonites to one another when they meet in the street, but it gives the members of the Crosstown Credit

Union a sense of being a part of a group of people whom they are like in some meaningful ways.

John Dyck (1993:2, 22) suggests that the Crosstown Credit Union developed partly from changes in the structure of the traditional Mennonite *waisenamt*,[5] an orphans' and widows' fund, and that it was partly modeled on the German credit union movement, which Mennonites first encountered in Canada (Dyck, J. 1993:9-12). It was incorporated on April 4, 1944 in response to the changing financial needs of Mennonites living in the city. Invitations to participate in the credit union were extended to "... persons who [were] bonafide members of the Mennonite faith residing or carrying on business within a radius of forty miles from the City Hall in Winnipeg, Manitoba" (Dyck, J. 1993:24-25). A 1977 proposal to open membership to the public met strong opposition and was defeated, because existing members wanted the institution limited to Mennonites (Dyck, J. 1993:139).

Crosstown remained the only exclusively Mennonite credit union in Manitoba (Dyck, J. 1993:131) until May of 1999, when the rules for membership changed. Since then, it has been a completely public credit union, which anyone may join. I cannot say what effect that will have on the institution, or on Mennonites in Winnipeg. At least as interesting for my purposes here, though, was a 1993 clarification of the original 1944 membership policy. That statement limited Crosstown Credit Union membership to 1) members of Mennonite churches, 2) their children, 3) Mennonite organizations and businesses (Dyck, J. 1993:139), and 4) people who fall somehow into a category John Dyck (1993:133) calls "friends of the Mennonite church who had not joined any other church." His book does not describe who might join based on that last criterium, but I asked, and it turns out that anyone able to demonstrate a "Mennonite heritage" who was a member of no church would qualify for credit union membership as a criterium number four applicant. Crosstown also has a 'once a member, always a member' policy, and some people who had left the church

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[5] Read David Rempel's (1974:38-39) "The Mennonite Commonwealth in Russia" for a good description of the *Weisenamt*.

continued to keep accounts there (Dyck, J. 1993:139). This conception of Mennonite seems at odds with some, but not others, that I have mentioned.

The Crosstown Credit Union also supports Mennonite values and ambitions. That is also part of what makes membership a satisfying expression of Mennonite identity in Winnipeg. John Dyck (1993:102) reports that it sponsors Mennonite arts and culture in Winnipeg, but goes into no detail about that. Crosstown also hosts occasional big parties for children who have accounts there. Maybe that in itself does not make the credit union Mennonite, but it might make it fun for those kids to be Mennonite. Also, since 1988, in cooperation with Mennonite church pastors who then supervise the repayment of the loans, Crosstown has had a program which provides small, interest-free loans of a few thousands of dollars each to people in particular need (Dyck, J. 1993:116). That is an example of a Mennonite value expressed in a Mennonite context. The Crosstown Credit Union annually donates all banking and accounting services to MCC's Winnipeg relief sales. Thus the credit union is both an expression and a reflection of some of the values, goals, and worldview that Mennonites have.

It is interesting to note that there was a bit of debate around the time of its founding about whether or not the credit union was a branch of the church. By providing them with affordable credit, Crosstown was doing good things for people in need, which was part of the mandate of the church, leading some people to conclude the credit union was part of the church. Others argued that because Crosstown regularly produced a profit, it must lie outside the church (Dyck, J. 1993:26). John Dyck (1993:143) concludes that the Crosstown Credit Union is not a church organization, but it is a Mennonite one. Like every Mennonite institution today, it is pretty closely associated with the church, but some of its policies about who may join, for example, or practices such as its occasional use of armed guards (Dyck, J. 1993:114) quite clearly remove it from the pacifist church, as well.

MEDA

I spoke with someone in the Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA) offices, and I have read some of their self-promotion literature. I find this an interesting organization. MEDA is one of the few Mennonite organizations not sponsored by any church group. That does not mean it does not make religious values central to its activities, or that no church people told me they admired it, only that its funding is not solicited directly during regular church events. MEDA juxtaposes two mandates related to capitalist business and some Mennonite version of Christianity. One is to provide Christian Mennonite businesspeople with a forum for discussing their particular interests, which are certainly related to doing business well, but also the conjoining of Christian faith and capitalist ambition, or the amelioration of conflicts between the two. The other mandate is to provide credit, training, and technical assistance to small businesses and small business development programs that request such assistance from MEDA (MEDA 1997a). Some of that assistance goes abroad, and some of it goes to migrants who have settled in North American cities and want to start their own businesses. In 1996, MEDA assisted seventeen thousand four hundred twenty-six families with nearly twenty thousand small loans (Kroeker 1996:3).

A MEDA staff member told me about two hundred Winnipeg Mennonites are members of Mennonite Economic Development Associates. They meet a few times a year as a group, and also occasionally as special interest groups, because some people have concerns different from others. There is a sub-group for young entrepreneurs, a separate one called senior MEDA for business people near or past retirement, one for Mennonite lawyers, and others (MEDA 1995:5). MEDA also organizes thematic seminars and conferences, publishes a bi-monthly magazine called *The Marketplace*, and holds a North America-wide convention every year (MEDA 1997a). MEDA events must be excellent opportunities for businesspeople to network. Part of every imagined community is composed of overlapping face-to-face networks of social relationships, so MEDA builds Mennonite community and affects identity by introducing people to one another. *The Marketplace* is sent to all Mennonite

church pastors automatically, and stories about MEDA do pop up in Mennonite newspapers from time to time (MEDA 1995; Kroeker 1996; MEDA 1997b), so MEDA must also be an institution through which Mennonite community is imagined.

I have no reason to doubt the people who told me that the personally most meaningful aspects of Mennonite community consisted of face to face relationships and side by side activities. Rather than replace that, imagined community is integrated with it and expands on it. What common knowledge about their activities and institutions does is make Mennonites more aware of the breadth and diversity of their own community. Things Mennonite institutions are doing must reasonably be interpreted as Mennonite activities. Those endeavors then become a part of people's knowledge about ways that it is possible to be a Mennonite, and about what sorts of things Mennoniteness can involve. An individual's conception of their own Mennoniteness need not include everything they know Mennonites are doing as Mennonites, but their general conception of who Mennonites are will likely be affected by that knowledge.

Formative History, or New Meanings for Heritage

Shared heritage contributes constructively to ethnic identity. It gives people a sense of exclusivity, since only they possess their heritage. It also provides them with a common purpose, which is the expression and continuation of their heritage (Alonso 1988:40). A proud history, as defined according to people's own terms, allows them to feel dignity in who they are, because they are an extension of their history (Olwig 1999:371). The possession of a convincing, inspiring, and unique history is especially useful for supporting a sense of peoplehood when that identity is not being made easily obvious by cultural differences (Castillo and Nigh 1998:136), as is the case among Mennonites in Winnipeg today.

Sometimes heritage and opportunity come into conflict in shifting cultural circumstances. This can create problems related to social and cultural reproduction across generations, and it can also make it difficult for individuals to adjust to the changing circumstances of the present (Appadurai 1996:44). On the other hand, heritage can be continuously recreated in response to ongoing social, economic, and political concerns. History is a mutable property of the present, and people can revise their heritage to construct a past with which the social and cultural present is continuous, and in whose terms it is explicable (Toren 1988:696). To connect the past and present constructively that way, new highlights and meanings are emphasized in the historical record, and people's collective relationship with their past is reinterpreted (Olwig 1999:370).

I will present a couple of versions of Mennonite heritage that I found in Winnipeg. As with other aspects of ethnic identity that I have tried to describe, my description of heritage will be a simplification of the matter, and it will create distinct categories from ideas that need not actually seem separate to Mennonites thinking about heritage. People's understandings of Mennonite heritage vary from one another's, and one individual's thoughts about Mennonite heritage might vary in different cultural contexts. Whatever the content and meaning of anyone's Mennonite history, their notion of heritage will have to be socially acceptable to some other Mennonites. Like all other aspects

of identity, it need not be absolutely in line with anyone else's, but it will have to fit in (Barth 1969a:29). Also, Castillo and Nigh (1998:141) argue that a collective conception of heritage can change within people's lifetime, and certainly an individual's personal sense of Mennonite heritage can change during their own life, as well.

The Prairie Pioneers

Royden Loewen (1993a:176) suggests that during the decades after the Second World War, Mennonites in the Rural Municipality of Hanover, where they formed a considerable majority, replaced an older version of their sense of heritage with a new one. Hanover is about sixty kilometres south and east of Winnipeg, and many of the Mennonites who have moved to Winnipeg over the years have moved there from Hanover municipality, taking both their dreams and their pasts with them, so I think Loewen's article is quite relevant to my essay. That pre-war Mennonite heritage he is talking about is best represented by Thielman van Braght's (1951[1660]) gigantic book *Martyrs' Mirror*, which idealized the Anabaptist martyrs who passively gave themselves up to the will of God, secure in their righteousness (Redekop 1985:97). The Mennonite word for that sort of attitude about fate and helplessness was *Gelassenheit*, which Calvin Redekop (1985:97) defined as resigned obedience to the will of God. The individual wills of those Mennonites were not subordinated only to the will of God, but also to the collective interests of their communities, where the conformity of all members was often highly valued (Dueck, Al 1988:217). David Rempel (1974b) lists a number of other Mennonite histories that had been written over the years, but it was *Martyrs' Mirror* that remained the definitive Mennonite history (Kraybill 1988:162). For a minority population likely, and in some matters even willing, to come into conflict from time to time with well-armed political interests more powerful than themselves, a heritage that glorified suffering and portrayed it as Godly was well able to bond people together in troubled times (Kraybill 1988:167). Janis Thiessen (1999:587) suggests *Gelassenheit* continues to be a part of Mennonite ideology in

Winnipeg today, but she does not say why, and I have not found much else that suggests it is.

Royden Loewen (1993a:175) describes some changes in Mennonite heritage that occurred in Hanover in the 1940s and 1950s. During that period, people began to base their conceptions of their own heritage on the lives of their hard-working ancestors who had broken new fields from the Canadian Prairie and established thriving farms and villages. Notions of progress drawn from those achievements served people well in mechanizing their farms and new businesses and expanding and improving their schools. This heritage, filled with heroic pioneers whose work ethic, creativity, and ableness helped them overcome great obstacles and establish themselves among Canada's founders, became a source of honest pride (Loewen, R. 1993a:176). The lifestyle and cultural values of those pioneers were not really suitable to the lives of post-war Mennonites, but symbolic expressions and reminders of that past became quite highly valued. Royden Loewen (1993a:175) proposes that some representations of this notion of heritage are the Mennonite Heritage Village, gatherings of extended families, and the writing of genealogies and celebratory histories. Regehr (1996:239) mentions Walter Quiring and Paul Schaefer as two notable Canadian Mennonite authors who promoted versions of this pioneer heritage as definitive Mennonite history. In fact, Quiring expanded the importance of these activities in his conception of Mennonite heritage to include the Mennonite agricultural pioneers in Latin America, and supposed Canadian Mennonites should be setting them as role models, too (Regehr 1996:239).

Winnipeg in the 1990s is surely not Hanover municipality in the 1940s and 1950s, but when I looked around Winnipeg, and thought about it a little, I found quite a lot that suggested that this notion of a Mennonite pioneer heritage remains quite current. Maybe its fullest and most thorough representation is the Mennonite Heritage Village, a museum in Steinbach, about seventy kilometres from Winnipeg. The museum includes one indoor hall filled with glass display cases of the kind common in museums, as well as a small village, in all of its aspects, which is operated throughout the annual agricultural cycle

using technologies from the Mennonite past. Someone there told me that the Winnipeg Mennonite schools, from elementary to post-secondary, as well as many church groups from the city, arrange to take tours of the museum every year. It is popular with people of all ages. Every August long weekend, the museum holds a special festival, called Pioneer Days, when a fair bit more activity than normal goes on, and visitors crowd the grounds.

Lawrence Klippenstein (1997:1) reports that constructing extended family genealogies has become quite a popular project for Mennonites. I guess there must have been someone working on one of those almost every time I was at the Mennonite Heritage Centre, the big Mennonite archive in Winnipeg, in the summer of 1998. The popularity of genealogy-making also matches what Royden Loewen (1993a:175) described as an expression of the Mennonite pioneer heritage. There have also been numerous Winnipeg church - congregational and conference histories published (Ens, Anna 1996; Neufeld 1989; Enns, E. 1986; Doerksen, J. 1986; Stoesz, D. 1985, Lousier *et al* 1975). The Concordia Hospital has published a history (Dueck, Abe J. 1978), as has the Mennonite Community Orchestra (Klassen, B. 1993), the Crosstown Credit Union (Dyck, J. 1993), and Bethania Mennonite Personal Care Home (Wiebe *et al* 1996). Some of those histories described their subjects a little more heroically than others, but all of them are clearly celebrations of the Mennonites who overcame adversity and created something good where those things had not existed before. I think the pioneering heritage that Royden Loewen (1993a) found in Hanover municipality fifty years ago is still an inspiring and guiding aspect of Mennonite heritage in Winnipeg, today.

The Anabaptist Vision

All of this said, I am not convinced that that is the notion of heritage which guides all Mennonites, nor many Mennonite institutions, in Winnipeg today. That view of heritage does not seem to include statements about everything that Mennonites told me made them Mennonite, or that Mennonite publicity literature I read claimed made Mennonite institutions Mennonite. Further, there are some ideas that I will mention again very shortly, including peacemaking,

discipleship, and Anabaptism, which are themes Mennonites talk about now (Driedger and Kauffman 1991:172, 41, 84), but which are absent in the prairie pioneers' heritage. I also do not perceive that that view of Mennonite heritage includes any tradition of outward-looking action, which is surely a notable part of Mennonite collective activity in Winnipeg today (Regehr 1996:325; Neufeld 1989:83-154; Epp, F. 1983:55). By outward-looking action, I basically mean missionary efforts and humanitarian aid projects of all sorts, and educational activities that expand people's understandings of the world and the Mennonite place in it. I guess the pioneers' version of Mennonite history also includes some things that not all Mennonites seem to care that much about anymore, notably the importance of remembering, or representing, aspects of the culture of past generations of Canadian Mennonites (Loewen, H. 1997:11; Rempel-Burkholder 1997:7; Baergen 1997:6).

Another influential modern version of popular Mennonite heritage centres not around Canadian Mennonite innovators, but around the sixteenth century Anabaptists. While the story of the prairie pioneers and its meaning are comparatively secular, this version of Mennonite history is preoccupied with religious themes. Unlike the *Martyrs' Mirror* (van Braght 1951[1660]), though, this history concentrates on the Anabaptists' lives, not their deaths. This new Mennonite history and its meaning were developed by Harold Bender and several of his colleagues at Goshen College, a Mennonite post-secondary school in Indiana, during the 1940s and 1950s. Ted Regehr (1996:239, 266) and Abe Dueck (1995:72) both suggest that until the 1970s, Bender's influence was felt most strongly among the Swiss Mennonites in eastern North America and among the Mennonite Brethren, but that it has since become influential among other Mennonites, as well. The value system promoted by the Goshen College scholars was presented as a return to the way of life of the thoughtful, vigorous, and ethically conscientious Anabaptists whose descendants eventually became the very Mennonites for whom the history was written. The lessons to be learned from this history were presented as the rightful Anabaptist values which Mennonites had lost somehow over time (Herschberger 1970:214). Harold Bender wrote the definitive version of this heritage, entitled

The Anabaptist Vision, and presented it as his presidential address to the American Society of Church History in 1943 (Toews, P. 1996:37).[6] Donald Kraybill (1988:165), an American Swiss Mennonite, claims that the Anabaptist vision has become the defining paradigm for Mennonite ethnic identity. Abe Dueck (1995:80) mentions a couple of other ideological Anabaptist and Mennonite histories that have been written in the post-war period, but points out that they have not had the sort of influence among Mennonites that *The Anabaptist Vision* has had.

Paul Toews (1996:36) and Steve Nolt (1999:496) both argue that the goal Bender and his colleagues had in formulating the Anabaptist vision was to create a corporate ideology with which to ground Mennonite identity and life within a new cultural and economic environment. The Anabaptist vision simultaneously redefined what was important about the Mennonite past, and articulated an ideological vision for being Mennonite in the present. These ideological lessons gained authority by being exemplified by the godly strivings of the historical Anabaptist heroes (Toews, P. 1996:37). The Anabaptist vision gave the Mennonites a way to be distinctive, which they see worth in being, and also gave them a rationale for interacting more comfortably with broader society, which they needed and wanted to do (Toews, P. 1996:38). The Anabaptist Vision frees Mennonites from the need to maintain spatial separation, allowing them to move to the city without compromising their Mennoniteness (Toews, P. 1996:37). Paul Toews (1996:37) suggests that because the subject matter of Bender's new history pre-dated all of the divisions that were fragmenting Mennonite society in the 1940s, it had the potential to unite Mennonites with different local histories or ideological orientations. Indeed, Mennonites are continuing now to unite various formerly parallel organizations (Regehr 1996:239; Rempel, R. 1998:2; Enns, A. 1998:17; Dueck, D. 1997:10).

While Bender's essay portrays the lives of some early Anabaptists in a way that provides the ideas he wants to communicate with the reinforcing

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[6] Someone told me they found it a little inspiring that Bender was so proud of his heritage that he would present it at such a place and time as that.

weight of history, it is essentially an ideological paper. There is some academic controversy concerning the historic accuracy of Bender's (1943:6) account of a single origin, as opposed to converging multiple origins, for the Anabaptist movement (Stayer *et al* 1975:84-85). Keeping facts straight is very important in academia, but the significance of *The Anabaptist Vision* is not tied to its unimpeachable historicity. Someone also suggested to me that Bender's narrative lacks a certain amount of literary merit. That is of no consequence. Lastly, Good (2000:179) notes that some modern Mennonite values and practices are quite unlike what one finds in the old Anabaptists' famous Schleitheim Confession, but that need not make modern ideas less Mennonite. Indeed, Good (2000:179) perceives, as one might suppose, that the discrepancy does not even bother many Mennonites. The worth of *The Anabaptist Vision* is contained in the meanings that people have drawn from it, and the ambitions they have pursued because of values that grew out of the ideas in the essay. Whoever the first Anabaptists were, and whatever they might have done, it is the meanings that have now been attributed to their actions and writings, and then adopted by modern Mennonites, that are important. To make an analogy, Anderson (1983:77) says the French Revolution was not really organized or planned by any group of ideologists, and had no famous leaders until Napoleon. Nevertheless, history has made the French Revolution into a point in time, with a surrounding ideology, "and no one has since doubted it was so." It seems to me that its surrounding ideology has made that point in time one of the world's more significant historic events in the last few centuries. Similarly, the meanings that Bender has drawn from Anabaptist history have had a big influence on Mennonites today.

While the significance of Bender's work lies in its function as an ideological paper, its ability to carry weight as a work of ideology lies partly in its framing as a history (Kraybill 1988:156). Bender (1944:13), citing academic German history, concludes that "Anabaptism is the culmination of the Reformation, the fulfillment of the original vision of Luther and Zwingli" and that the Anabaptists were "seeking to recreate without compromise the original New Testament church, the vision of Christ and the apostles." He (Bender 1944:12)

opposes this interpretation to a version of Anabaptist history proposed by Ludwig Keller, who traced the direct ideological descent of Anabaptism beginning with the first Christian church described in the Bible, through successive historical groups of Christian radicals, to the sixteenth century. The difference is that Bender's version of history leaves Mennonites room to think of themselves, and their super-ethical Anabaptist antecedents, as being a distinct people, while Keller would make the Anabaptists a part of something else that predated and encompassed more than just them. Steve Nolt (1999:496-498) and Paul Toews (1996:37) both emphasize that *The Anabaptist Vision* allowed Mennonites to feel confidently that they had both a history and a religion unlike anyone else's. Mennonites' experiences in Russia and Canada had convinced them that they were different from everyone else (Urry 1989:103; Ens, Adolf 1994b:69), and they had long been applying euphemisms such 'in the world, but not of it' (Thiessen, Janis 1999:587), 'the quiet on the land' (Loewen, H. 1980:91), and 'a people apart' (Redekop, J. 1983:80) to themselves. It seems reasonable that people like that would place high value on a history of their own, as opposed to being a part of someone else's, and Bender's (1944:13) description of ideologically unique Anabaptists gives Mennonites that. Many Mennonites count a direct ancestral line back to the Anabaptists, so clearly separating Anabaptist history, and the meanings to be drawn from it, from other historical Christian movements also reinforces the distinctly Mennonite meaningfulness of the Anabaptist history the new ideas are based on.

References to the Anabaptist heritage of Mennonites, and to an Anabaptist-Mennonite identity, are common in Mennonite public statements, now. I found them in the mandates of schools (Westgate 1998:3; WMES 1997:5), in scholarly theological treatises and works by social scholars (Redekop, J. 1987:13; Driedger and Harder 1990; Vogt 1988:311, Yoder 1980:9; Doerksen, Victor G. 1988:48; Nolt 1999:496; Regehr 1996:xxi; Loewen, H. 1983:124), in newspaper articles (Waltner 1982:13; Janzen, M. 1996:9; Longhurst 1996c:9) and in publicity pamphlets (MCC n.d.a:4). I also found a stack of copies of a booklet form of *The Anabaptist Vision* in the bookstore at the Canadian Mennonite Bible College. Not every Mennonite need actually

read Bender's *Anabaptist Vision* (1944) for it to remain influential. For Bender's work, and the publications of the other Goshen scholars, to be influential, it is only necessary that many people be positively influenced by the substance of the ideas, in whatever way, and that people find symbols - in this case, understandings of important historical events - that can help inspire or unite them (Barth 1969a:29; Hobsbawm 1995:9).

I asked nine Winnipeg Mennonites about the relationship of history to modern Mennonite identity. One of them gave an answer quite different from the others. That person told me Mennonite history was not really important to Mennoniteness at all. The other eight said things that suggested to me either the pioneering builder heritage that Royden Loewen (1993a) talked about, or Bender's *Anabaptist Vision*, or both. I could not ask people simply to assign themselves to one heritage category or another, because I think no categories like that exist in the popular imagination. We talked only about themes in Mennonite heritage, and about their implications for living today. One of the interviewees in my tiny sample seemed to perceive their Mennoniteness to be like the pioneers. That person made no mention of Anabaptists, but told me Mennonites value their culture very much. They said Canada has gained a lot from its Mennonites, because they have been industrious and economically successful here. Three of the people I spoke with seemed to have a sense of a dual history, maybe created approximately equally by vigorous, culturally distinct Mennonite prairie pioneers and by idealistic Anabaptist reformers. They spoke about their Mennonite cultural heritage and the contribution Mennonite creativity and hard work makes to Canadian society and the Winnipeg economy, and they also spoke about the importance of the ethical principles, such as peacemaking and discipleship, commonly attributed to the Anabaptists, and how it makes one distinctly a Mennonite to pursue those values. The other four people seemed to think the most meaningful aspects of Mennonite history concerned the Anabaptists. They made statements about Mennonite food or language being less important parts of Mennoniteness now than Christian faith, service, and peacemaking. Although I did not ask them about this directly, three of these four also volunteered that they believed that Mennonites limited their

Christian potential when they kept too closely to ethnically Mennonite social circles. The same three also made special mention that they thought Mennonites were too concerned with professional success. One of those three people also emphasized that he believed his views in these matters to be exceptional rather than common among Winnipeg Mennonites.

For what this is worth, I doubt that Bender's religiously oriented version of Mennonite heritage is central to the Mennonite identity of many non-church-going Mennonites in Winnipeg. Abe Dueck (1995:80) argues that while many members of General Conference Mennonite churches thought of the Anabaptist vision as a "different understanding of Mennonite peoplehood," people in Mennonite Brethren churches more often regarded it as an alternative theology that could displace "dispensationalist fundamentalism or other forms of North American evangelicalism." One consequence of this understanding of history as religious ideology is that the Anabaptist version of Mennonite heritage allows people who value their places in Mennonite churches, but feel little connected to the Mennonite farmers who broke the prairie, to be Mennonite on equal terms with anyone. It allows anyone to participate in Mennonite history (Redekop, J. 1987:16; Ross 1988:269; Longhurst 1969b:9). Just as the ancient Greeks wrote the ideological history of many of the people of Europe, Anabaptists might well be able to write the ideological history of anyone who wants to claim it.

Mennonite Anabaptism in Canada

One of the arguments Royden Loewen (1993a:176) made in his paper about post-war Hanover was that the people's new conception of their heritage protected their distinctiveness at the same time that it facilitated their effective participation within their broader Canadian cultural environment at the time. The pioneer heritage celebrated Mennoniteness, but also progress, the family, and self-reliance, which fit well with the values of many Canadians in those days (Loewen, R. 1993a:181). It seems only reasonable that *The Anabaptist Vision* should similarly well suit Mennonites to Canadian life in the present. Steve Nolt (1999:497) argues that Anabaptist history and church-centred social activities had begun replacing increasingly impractical cultural and linguistic

markers of Mennonite ethnic identity in the American mid-west even before World War Two. Nolt (1999:498) observes that Bender's essay crystallized that trend and gave Mennonite identity new focus.

The Anabaptist vision provides Mennonites with a means for participating effectively and comfortably in broader society on obviously Mennonite terms (Toews, P. 1996:37). Bender described three Anabaptist ideals, which he called discipleship, voluntary church membership, and non-resistant love. Discipleship means living in a manner fashioned as entirely as possible after the teaching and example of Christ (Bender 1944:20). A disciple's lifestyle should become evidence of their faith, and Bender (1944:20) compared active Anabaptist discipleship favourably to more passive sixteenth century Christianities he supposed were based only on professions of faith. Bender's (1944:21) emphasis on discipleship as *Nachfolge*, or active faith, distinguishes it from *Gelassenheit,* a more passive faith from the Mennonite past. According to Bender (1943:28), successful discipleship demands the willingness to make sacrifices in support of expressions of faith. Sacrifice is an aspect of both the Mennonite pioneer heritage and the martyrs' heritage, so maybe becoming disciples was not a big stretch in some ways. Discipleship is highly valued at the MCC now (MCC n.d.:4), and Kraybill (1996:56), Shenk (1996:11), and Herschberger (1970:213) have singled the MCC out as the Mennonites' best expression of Anabaptist values. I asked no one about this, and I have not found it commented on in the literature, but discipleship seems to me to match to the meritocratic urge toward constant achievement popularly admired in Canada (Gwyn 1995:83). Becoming a Christ-like disciple, whatever that might mean to particular individuals, is so difficult and intangible a goal that it must become a more or less life-long project.

Bender (1944:26) also advocates a Mennonite return to the Anabaptist pattern, where church membership was voluntary and motivated by personal conviction. I do not want to question the Christian faith of Mennonites in the past or the present, nor the role of the church in nurturing or expressing that faith. Still, churches are social institutions, as Bender must have known, and economic and political concerns are aspects of every social institution. What

exactly voluntarism might be in economic and political matters is sometimes difficult to define. Mennonites in the past could not be baptized and acknowledged as church members until they had made a public statement describing their faith, and so their decision to join the church was nominally voluntary. In actuality, the community, expressing itself through the church, often held quite a firm and encompassing practical grip on nearly everyone born of Mennonite parents. During some periods in history, not participating in the church was to risk becoming marginalized within one's cooperative agricultural village, which was a serious economic risk, if nothing else. It seems questionable to say that church membership was voluntary under those circumstances (Neufeld 1989:13-15; Smith, V. 1998:6). With urbanization, the directness of Mennonite's social and economic interactions with one another diminished, and the variety of people who reliably participated in the social networks of individual Mennonites expanded. Mennonites' practical ability to enforce standards on one another corporately has therefore been considerably reduced (Lohrenz 1974:2; Regehr 1996:171). A voluntary church fits well with the self-determination valued by independent-minded modern Canadians (Gwyn 1995:83), including Mennonite Canadians. Despite its relatively weak position to exert direct practical influence, a voluntary church that is a good part of people's lives can maintain legitimacy among Mennonites partly because it matches their Canadian values (Hamm 1990:126), and of course also for the same reasons related to religious conviction for which Christians everywhere value their churches. Most Mennonites who go to church now go because they want to, not simply because they are Mennonites.

The third of Bender's (1944:31) characterizations of the Anabaptists is that they applied an ethic of non-resistant love in all human relationships. This meant Anabaptists did not engage in violence at all, and particularly in war, which both the German Roman Catholics and Protestants of the day were all too ready to engage in (Hamm 1987:42). Promoting peace is a great idea for anyone, anywhere, but Bender (1944:32-33) describes it as an identifiably Mennonite property. He compares it to the peace ethic of the Quakers (Bender 1944:32), but points out that the Anabaptist peace stance is one hundred and

twenty-five years older. He (1944:33) also compares the Anabaptists' non-resistance to the ideas of pacifist philosophers who predated them, but who left no lasting heritage of people putting those ideas into practice, and argues that makes the Anabaptist peace perspective unique.

In the past, Mennonites philosophies of pacifism were expressed quite differently than they have come to be now. Mennonites in Russia had refused to take part in the military when they were asked, maintaining that it was against their Mennonite beliefs to do so. Nevertheless, they were quite generous in their material support of the Russian government during the Crimean War, when many Mennonites also made a considerable profit supplying various goods for the war effort (Urry 1989:147, 150), and again during the war with Turkey (Urry 1989:257).[7] Regehr (1996:45) reports that at the start of World War Two, most Mennonite young men were unable to make clear statements explaining why they should not participate in the military. Leaders petitioned the government simply to release Mennonites categorically, since they believed it was a part of being Mennonite not to participate in war. That makes me wonder if pacifism at that time, as much as it was a social or religious value, was an ethnic icon that marked Mennonites, in their own minds at least, as separate from everyone else.

Present day Mennonites have surely embraced their peace ethic, and reconceived it to mean more than it has during any other Mennonite era. Driedger and Kraybill (1994:26) suppose the "heritage of non-resistance" cuts across any other boundaries that divide Mennonites. Bender interpreted Anabaptist history to mean that Anabaptists should not intentionally hurt others physically (1944:31), and that it was their responsibility to demonstrate the caring of Jesus through their relations with everyone (1944:35). Both Ronald Mathies (1995) and Driedger and Kraybill (1994) have described how Mennonite conceptions of peace have changed in the half century since the war, moving well beyond anything that Bender made explicit. Koontz (1996:69) maintains that the Mennonite peace ethic has come to imply the action directed

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[7] Myovich (1996:220) reports that the reputation Mennonites gained for their generous economic contributions to the Polish war effort against Sweden in 1655 was of great political utility to them in their dealings with the Polish state for years afterward.

toward a vision of a just society worldwide, as that society is defined by Mennonites. According to Koontz (1996:72), the non-resistant love portion of *The Anabaptist Vision* is about human relationships, not religious ones, and peace will follow the establishment of perceived worldwide human social and economic equality. Mennonite peacemaking has become an economic and political activity, no longer an attitude about the military. Thus the economic development activities undertaken by a few Mennonite organizations are also an expression of Mennonite peace-making ambitions. Driedger and Kraybill (1994:157) argue convincingly that this striving for equality, while expressed on clearly Mennonite terms, fits well with Canadian and international values of equality, as well.

Certainly there is much more to the heritage of Mennonites in Winnipeg now than only these meanings drawn from the activities of the prairie pioneers and the old Anabaptists. I have only described a few aspects of it. The point I hope I have made is that Mennonites are able to draw meanings and examples of admirable Mennonite activities from their knowledge of the past to find cultural stuff with which to interpret their identity in the present. A variable and uneven combination of heritages might allow people some flexibility in the ambitions and values they attribute to their Mennoniteness, or to the different lifestyles that Mennonites might be able to agree are legitimately Mennonite. The modern Mennonite heritage allows Mennonites to live comfortably and successfully in Winnipeg.

Conclusion

The conclusion of my paper is that Mennonite ethnic identity in Winnipeg today is a reflection of the life that Mennonites there live, and also part of what organizes cultural meaning and social activity in their lives. My paper focuses on Mennonites in Winnipeg, but their identities are essentially formed within a Canadian context, and are unique to Winnipeg in only a few ways. Mennonite culture, the values and goals of Mennonites, and Mennonite identity along with those, have changed a great deal over the years to become in some ways less distinctly Mennonite and more integrated with other Canadians. Because there are only certain ways that anyone could likely be able to become economically successful and comfortably able to participate socially in broader Canadian society, it is obvious that some of that change has been forced on Mennonites by other Canadians. Many Mennonites want to be economically successful, partly in order to be able to support their various separately Mennonite institutions and projects, so a considerable amount of the Mennonite adaptation to Canada has been driven by Mennonites' own ambitions, too. Canadian nationalism, historically and in the present, has also forced Mennonite integration. At the same time, Canadian Mennonites have come to value their social position, and identity, as Canadians, which sometimes separates them from American and other Mennonites, because of the opportunities their position gives them in their daily lives. Rather than being in significant conflict now, Mennoniteness and Canadianness are often parallel or mutually reinforcing for Mennonites in Winnipeg.

There is no definitive Mennonite identity in Winnipeg these days, rather there are many overlapping and generally compatible versions of Mennonite identity. Mennonite ethnic identity is most easily visible in those aspects of life in which Mennonites are (often conscientiously) different from other Canadians. Since Mennonites share some values and projects that are separate from what other Canadians are doing, someone who is not distinct from other Canadians in a Mennonite way could not likely feel successful as a Mennonite. Nevertheless, Mennonite plurality has resulted in a situation in which there are

many legitimate ways to be ethnically Mennonite, and in which there seems to be a great deal of room for discussion of everything that might make one Mennonite, and of what some good ways of being Mennonite are. What makes one Mennonite is most of all one's own belief that one is Mennonite, but also one's ability to convince some other Mennonites, on Mennonite terms, that one is indeed a Mennonite. That can be simple, but people basically need to refer to ethnic icons to do it. Some icons of Mennoniteness I talked about were religion, history, language, cuisine, ancestry, and participation in some Mennonite institutions, any of which can mark one as a Mennonite, but not any one of which seems necessary for Mennoniteness. Mennonite religion is always influentially tied to Mennonite ethnicity for ethnic Mennonites, but not all religious Mennonites are ethnic Mennonites, and vice versa. Religion has become the focus of Mennonite identity in Winnipeg, and churches are centres from which many Mennonite social activities are organized. A good part of the reason for that is that religion is the Mennonite ethnic icon which comes into the least conflict with non-Mennonite aspects of life in Canada, and activities organized by the church, especially volunteering, have generally been able to bring Mennonites a good reputation here. There are different views of what is meaningful and important in Mennonite history, but most Mennonites do relate their sense of identity somehow to a meaningful Mennonite heritage. Other icons of ethnic Mennoniteness, such as language and cuisine, seem to be less compelling parts of Mennoniteness for many people. Although there are limits to what one can do as a Mennonite, and some activities or attitudes cannot popularly be classed as Mennonite, those sorts of limits are quite broad and negotiable these days.

Mennonites in Winnipeg form an imagined community. To a great extent, this is how their broader solidarity is formed, and this is why Mennonites are able to rally in support of common causes despite their diversity, and even though most Mennonites only ever encounter a tiny minority of the other Mennonites in Winnipeg personally. Community can be imagined as an extension of one's own sense of Mennoniteness, and accommodate a certain amount of ignorance of others, or indifference to them, all the while including a

selected portion of those other people's activities and attitudes as a legitimization of one's own identity. That sense of social community is one of the reasons that Mennonite ethnic identities are able to provide people's lives with meaning. The communications media is key to the formation of Mennonite imagined community, as are people's experiences and knowledge of what some of the Mennonite institutions, such as the MCC and MEDA are doing. Membership in the Crosstown Credit Union has also played a part in representing and forming imagined community for Mennonites.

Consistent with changes in the character of Mennonite ethnic identities, Mennonite heritage has been revised in some significant ways. Whereas the lessons Mennonites drew from their own history during the agrarian past might well have been suited to the lives people lived then (Redekop 1985:97), that ideological heritage is poorly suited to life in the city. Mennonites have drawn new lessons from the lives of their prairie pioneer ancestors that support the sort of hard work and creativity that can help them succeed on the terms of the liberal capitalist Canadian culture, and that might be able to give them pride in their role in constructing the Canada we know today. Mennonites have also come to value a new way of understanding the lives of the Anabaptists. Just as Mennonite identity has become quite focused on religious matters since the Second World War, this part of popular Mennonite heritage is primarily religious in its themes and goals. While the substance of the Anabaptist vision supports and guides modern Mennonite activities in a way that seems consistent with the lives of some Mennonite heroes from the past, it does so in a way that also contributes to Mennonites' abilities to live satisfying and successful lives in the urban Canadian present. In this way, Mennonite understandings of their own heritage have come to support their ambitions in the present, both as models for action, and as foundations for ideology.

Ethnicity can be a very flexible way of forming social identity and organizing relationships. As Barth (1969a:14) argued, the most important criterium for deciding one's ethnic identity is ascription. Most of all, we are who we believe we are, not so much who we can prove we are. Although ethnic ascription invariably creates dichotomous categories of inclusion and exclusion,

the populations and character of those 'us' and 'them' categories are profoundly variable, according to the context in which one is assessing affiliation (Nagata 1974:333). Related to the variability of ethnic identity is the uneven distribution and valuation of ethnic icons among the people who share that identity. Ethnic identities are always reinforced and expressed somehow through perceived cultural similarity, and ethnic solidarity comes from people's similarities and shared goals, which, like ethnic dichotomies, can be perceived and evaluated differently in different situations. Social cooperation is not certain among people who share ethnic identities, but sharing an ethnic identity will likely make social cooperation in some matters seem quite natural, or at least attractive.

A considerable portion of this essay was concerned with a description of plurality, both among Mennonites, and also, less directly, among Canadians. While ethnic identity helps structure meaning within people's lives, and it can unite people in support of ethnic causes, ethnicity also leaves people a lot of room for diversity. Judging by the general economic and social position of Mennonites in Canada (Regehr 1988:60; Sawatsky 1994:104), I would say this kind of pluralism has been a good way to construct both Mennonite identity in Canada, as well maybe as Canadian identity more generally. If this paper has applications outside this case study, maybe they relate to the way the people of the whole world are becoming increasingly culturally integrated, and ethnic connections are becoming more and more transnational (Appadurai 1996:37). Even when nationalism and the nation-state have been losing their currency as social organizers and their ability to maintain much cultural hegemony (Appadurai 1996:37), more portable and flexible ethnic identities have remained compelling and constructive bases for identity-formation. Ethnicity can be free of the destructive potential of nationalism, with its fights over territory, and still provide people with meaningful social community. That seems like something very good. On the other hand, ethnicity always carries with it the potential to be transformed into nationalism, as the example of Serbs in the erstwhile Yugoslavia (Partos 1997:96-97) demonstrates well enough. I do not know if the Canadian Mennonite example can become a model for anyone else

dealing with matters of integration and separateness, but it is good to know what is going on in the world, and people do learn a lot from each other. Canadian Mennonites' ability to participate in a meaningful identity that is separate in some ways, and at the same time to integrate constructively and satisfyingly with other Canadians in many other important matters, could form an example of how ethnic identity can be constructed in a plural society.

Besides being an interesting example of how ethnicity can organize people within pluralist Canada, the themes and examples that came up in my paper address the topic of social legitimacy and value. Social organizations and ideas about ethnic identity become valid and valued because of the place they have in people's lives. Cultural values, customs, and attitudes that people share become integral to their identities. They influence answers to the question 'who am I?' At the same time that people's commonalities mark who they are in some way, though, recognizing the place of those commonalities in one's identity reciprocally contributes ethnic meaning to those same distinctive aspects of shared culture. In this way, social solidarity based on ethnic identity creates a circle in logic that lends value to aspects of culture because those things have value in affirming and expressing identity. While aspects of people's cultural manner of living become integral to the construction of their ethnic identities, those identities have value because they are integral to the way those people order the living of their lives.

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